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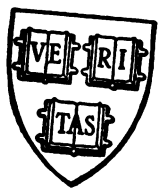

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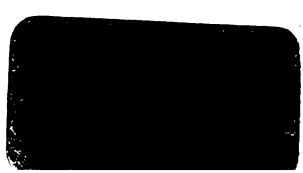

AMY HERBERT.

VOL. II.

AMY HERBERT.

BY A LADY.

EDITED BY

THE REV. W. SEWELL, B.D.

FELLOW OF EXETER COLLEGE, OXFORD.

" Why should we fear Youth's draught of joy,
If pure, would sparkle less?
Why should the cup the sooner cloy,
Which God hath deign'd to bless? "

Christian Year.

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AMY HERBERT.

CHAPTER XVII.

"I WISH Frank would not make such a fuss about those stupid boys who are coming to-day," said Dora, as he left the room when breakfast was ended, expressing his great delight that Monday morning was at length arrived, and begging them all to make a point of coming down to the lake in the afternoon to see the skating: "it is bad enough to have a number of strange girls here, but really to be worried with rude boys is more than any one can bear."

"Perhaps they are not rude," said Amy.

"Yes, but they are," replied Dora: "I am sure they must be rude and awkward; I cannot bear them."

"But Frank, you can bear him."

"Oh that is quite a different thing—not but what he is a torment sometimes; but I do not want to talk about them now. Margaret, please, don't go away; just help me to settle how we are to amuse ourselves when the people come; I have had such a lecture from mamma this morning about making ourselves agreeable."

"Dear me, I don't know," said Margaret; "let them take care of themselves; I daresay they will find something to do."

"There is the conjurer for Wednesday," observed Dora, thoughtfully; "but there are two days to that, and what shall we do with them till then?"

"Really," said Miss Cunningham, "I should think there would be quite sufficient amusement in being here, and seeing the house; for you told me the other day they none of them lived in such a large place."

"Yes," said Margaret, "to be sure, they can go over the house, and round the grounds."

"Round the grounds!" exclaimed Dora; "why it is going to snow hard."

"Well," replied Margaret, "I should never trouble myself about it beforehand; when they come they will amuse themselves, and if they do not like it they need not come again."

"That is not my way," continued Dora; "it would not be very agreeable to be told they had had a stupid visit at the house of the first gentleman in the county. We must have more ways of entertaining them than they can have at home."

"I can't think, though, what they are," said Amy; "but I daresay you will recollect something when the time comes; and, you know, Dora, though I could not talk to any of them as you can, I could play with the little ones."

"Ah! but I do not mind the little ones," said Dora; "they will be very happy with a doll, and Emily Morton will take care of them; but there are two or three great ones, the Miss Stanleys and Miss Warner, who have always been at school; I have not seen them, and I know they are coming early: people always do come early when one does not want them;" and Dora looked at Miss Cunningham, and thought of the last Saturday morning.

"We might talk for ever," said Margaret, "and it would be no good, and really I have no time to think about it now: do, Lucy, come to my room, and

look at that dress which you said could be altered like yours. Morris will have no time if it is not given her this morning, and I must go and talk to mamma before it is begun."

"That is just like you, Margaret," said Dora, "you never will help me; but mamma says you must try this afternoon, so it will be no use for you and Lucy to shut yourselves up in your room; you must come down, or she will be very angry."

Amy saw that Dora was gradually becoming extremely annoyed, and earnestly longed to soothe her, but she was rather afraid to interfere; she did, however, venture to say, that perhaps some of them might be fond of reading, and then there would be less trouble.

"Oh! yes," exclaimed Margaret, who did not quite like to go, and yet was very unwilling to stay, "that will just do, Amy; they shall read, and then they will all be quite comfortable, and we may go our own way; I am so glad that matter is settled, I do so hate trouble and fuss."

"So we do all," said Dora, angrily, as Margaret hastily ran out of the room; "only some people are forced to take it. That plan of yours will not do at all, Amy, and I cannot think how you could be so silly as to propose it. School girls never like reading, and, if they do, they can have enough of it at home. What they ought to have here should be something to mark the place, something they should remember, something, in short, quite different from what they could find any where else."

Amy did her best to think, but it was all to no purpose; and Dora at last could only sigh and moan, and walk to the window and watch the weather, and wish that the snow would come down and keep them all at home.

"And snow Miss Cunningham in," said Amy, laughing.

"To be sure," answered Dora, "that would be rather odious. What a goose she made of herself last night, Amy, and how delighted I was when you had all the praise."

"So was I, too," said Amy; "but I don't think I was right. I am sure, indeed, I was not; for I spoke to mamma about it afterwards, and she told me it was vanity."

"As for that," said Dora, "every one is vain."

"But then," said Amy, "we promised at our baptism that we would not be so; and mamma says that persons who are vain soon become envious, and that envy leads to very great crimes, and that if we indulge in vanity, we can never tell how wicked we shall become by-and-by."

"I cannot understand why you are always talking of baptism, Amy," said Dora; "it seems as if it had something to do with every thing, according to your notions."

"According to mamma's notions, you mean; she reminds me of it so often that I cannot possibly forget it."

"But there is no one in the world who has kept the promise," said Dora; "and then they say we have such a wicked nature: what is the use of thinking about being good when we have no power to be so?"

"I do not think I understand it quite," replied Amy, "and I am sure, Dora, I cannot teach you, but I could tell you what mamma tells me."

"And what is that?" asked Dora.

"Mamma says," answered Amy, "that when we are born we all have very wicked natures; but that, when we are baptized, God gives us a new nature which is good, and that, when we grow up, we can do right if we really wish to do it, because we have the Holy Spirit always to help us; and once, when I made an excuse for something I had done wrong,

by saying that it was natural, and I could not help it, she told me that it might have been an excuse if I had not been baptized, but that now it was no excuse at all."

"Then what are we to do?" said Dora: "no person really keeps their promise. How wicked we must all be!"

"Mamma says we are," replied Amy; "and that we ought to be so very careful about our smallest actions, and our words and thoughts, because it is so dangerous to do wrong now."

"But," said Dora, "I cannot see why people should be baptized, if it only makes them worse off than they were before."

"Oh! but indeed, Dora," exclaimed Amy, looking rather shocked, "it makes us better off than we were before,—a great deal better off; for you know the service about baptism says that we are made God's children, really his children; and that, when we die, we shall go to heaven, if we try and do right now, and beg him to forgive us, when we do wrong, for our Saviour's sake."

"I do not understand it," said Dora; "and I never heard any one talk about it till I came to Emmerton."

"I did not understand it half as well," replied Amy, "till mamma told me a story about uncle Harrington's birth-day, and said that, when we were baptized, we were made heirs of heaven, just as he was heir to this place and all the property; and even now it puzzles me very much, and very often I cannot believe that it is all true; but I try to do so, because mamma says it is, and shows me where it is written in the Bible."

"But how can we tell that we have a good nature given us at our baptism?" said Dora: "I never feel it; I don't think I do any thing that is right all day

long: you may have a good nature, Amy, and I think you have, but I know I have not."

"Mamma says," answered Amy, "that being sorry for our faults and wishing to do better is a sign of it; and you know, Dora, you often tell me how much you wish to do right, and sometimes, when I have had a great many wrong feelings,—vain feelings, I mean, and angry and envious ones, the only thing that makes me at all happy again, is because I feel sorry for it."

Dora sighed deeply. "I wish," she said, "that the bad nature would go all at once, I am so tired of wishing to do good, and always doing wrong, and then I begin to think there is no use in trying. It would be easier if I could believe that it was true about baptism, because then it would appear as if there was something to help me; but I have always heard people talk about having such a very wicked nature, till at last it seemed foolish to hope to be good, as if it were impossible: not but what I do try sometimes, Amy," she continued, with a sudden impulse to be unreserved, which she had occasionally felt when talking to her cousin since their little disagreement; "I do try sometimes, though I daresay you will not believe it, because I am so cross. I meant to have tried this morning, only Lucy Cunningham made me so angry by the way she twisted her head about, and the nonsense she talked at breakfast, that I could not help becoming out of humour with every one; and when once I am annoyed in the morning, I go on so all day; but you cannot understand that, it is so unlike you."

"I can, though," replied Amy, "for I very often am provoked when I watch Miss Cunningham, and hear her talk; but I try not to look at her, and to think of something else."

"I cannot do that," said Dora; "when she is in

the room, I find myself watching her and listening to her, though I would give the world not to do it; for I am always longing to stop her, or say something sharp, and yet when I do, I am so vexed with myself for it. I know nothing will ever go right while she is with us."

"Then you will not be uncomfortable long," replied Amy.

"But," said Dora, "I know very well that it is no use feeling properly only when every thing goes as you like; what I wish is to have the power of being good always: there are some people who are never put out of humour—aunt Herbert for one; I long to be like her."

"So do I," exclaimed Amy, eagerly, "but then she is so very, very good; I don't think it is possible to be what she is; Mrs Walton says she never met with any one like her."

"That is what disheartens me; good people are so up in the clouds, where one can never get at them."

"I suppose though," answered Amy, "they were not always so good: mamma often says she did a great many naughty things when she was my age."

"I wish she would tell me what made her better, then," said Dora: "did she ever tell you?"

"No," replied Amy; "all that she ever told me was what I ought to do myself to cure my faults, and she said that she would pray to God to help me."

"No one will ever promise that for me," observed Dora, sighing.

"But mamma will, I am sure," exclaimed Amy, eagerly, "and I ——"

"Why do you stop?" said Dora.

"Mamma tells me to mention all your names in my prayers," replied Amy; "but I don't mean that that would be the same as her doing so, because she is so much better."

"I cannot see what difference that can make: I should like very much to think you did it always for me; but it must be such a trouble to remember."

"Oh no, Dora, it would seem so unkind not to do it, and if I thought you cared, I never could forget; but some day or other, when I am quite good, it will be of much more use."

"Does aunt Herbert think that no one must pray for others but those who never do any thing wrong?" asked Dora, in a tone of surprise.

"No; she says we all ought to pray for each other, and that it is quite our duty; but we are told in the Bible that very good persons' prayers are heard, particularly; and so mamma says that is one reason for trying to conquer our faults; because God will be more likely to attend to us then."

"I cannot think you ever had any faults to cure; you never could have been ill-tempered."

"Oh, Dora, pray don't say so; it makes me think I must be so deceitful, for I am often ill-tempered, and I used to be so every day at my lessons."

"Then," said Dora, "you can tell me just what I want to know: what did you do to make yourself better?"

"I used to talk about it to mamma," replied Amy; "and one day particularly, I remember I was very unhappy, and thought I should be cross all my life; and then she showed me a prayer which she had written out for me: it was taken from the Collects and the Psalms, and she begged me to repeat it every morning and evening, and once, in the middle of the day, too, and try to think about it; and she marked some verses in the Bible, and gave me a short prayer besides, just a few words to say to myself when I felt that I was becoming out of temper; and she advised me when I knew I had been doing wrong, in that or any thing else, to go to my room instantly, and pray

to God to forgive me; and after I had done as she desired for some time, and really tried very hard not to speak when I was angry, and to give up to whatever mamma wished, I found it much easier to be good tempered."

"But," said Dora, "that is so much to do. I never heard before of any one saying their prayers in the middle of the day: why should it be necessary?"

"Oh!" replied Amy, "if people do not pray, they never can have any help from God; and the Holy Spirit, which was given them at their baptism, will go away from them, and they will become dreadfully wicked."

"It is right for people to say their prayers every morning and evening, of course," said Dora, "but I must say again, I never heard of any persons doing it in the middle of the day."

"I thought a great many people did; at least I know I have read in the old times of some who said them seven times, and in the Bible it is mentioned. Don't you remember one of the lessons they read in the church about Daniel, and how he prayed three times every day?"

"Ah! yes, in the Bible; but then in the Bible every one does what is right. I never think the persons we read of there could be like us."

"They did not always do right though," answered Amy, "because it very often says that God was displeased with them: you know how angry Moses was once, and how he was not allowed to go with the Israelites. Whenever I read that, I always think that I should have felt exactly like him."

"I cannot say I ever thought much about it," said Dora: "one hears it all in church; but I always am so sleepy on a Sunday, that I cannot attend."

"But I suppose you are not always sleepy when you read at home."

"I never do read at home now: we used to do it when we were children; for mamma taught us to read like every one else out of the Bible, but I thought of nothing but the hard words, and it always appeared a lesson book, and so I never looked at it afterwards. I forgot though, on a Sunday we were accustomed to read a chapter, but we have left off that lately: I don't quite know why, except that we are too old."

"Too old to read the Bible!" repeated Amy, with a feeling of painful surprise that her cousin should have such ideas.

"I don't mean too old to read it at all," replied Dora, "but too old to be forced to do it."

"Mamma does not force me to do it," said Amy; "but it seems to come naturally: the day would be quite strange if we missed it."

"Do you mean to say that you read it every day, or only on Sundays?"

"Every day," replied Amy. "We always read the psalms and lessons the first thing after breakfast, except on Wednesdays and Fridays, and Saints' days, when we go to church."

"Go to church on the week days!" exclaimed Dora; "who ever heard of such a thing?"

"I thought it was what almost every one did," replied Amy; "and I always fancied you would if you were not so far from the church."

"I cannot imagine what the good of it all is," said Dora.

"But it is ordered," replied Amy, "in the Prayer Book."

"I do not see that is any reason for it; its being ordered does not make it good."

"I once asked mamma some questions about it," said Amy; "and she told me that the Prayer Book was put together by very good men, who knew a great deal better than we do what was right; and that it

was composed from the prayers which were used a great, great many years before, just in the time after our Saviour died, and that they had made all the rules about the service and the Saints' days, according to the old customs; and so now, it was the law of the Church in England, and every one ought to attend to it."

"Every one does not attend to it though," replied Dora: "at Wayland, no person ever thought of going to church except on Sundays."

"I believe," said Amy, "the Prayer Book says there ought to be service every day; and there are regular psalms and lessons marked in the calendar."

"Perhaps so; but I am sure if people were to go to church as often as you say, there would be no time for anything else."

"We generally manage to do very much the same on Wednesdays and Fridays as on other days: it is merely doing things at different hours."

"If I could only see the good of it, I should not care," said Dora; "but it is so strange to be always thinking so much of one thing; prayers at home, and reading the Bible, and going to church every day: I should get so tired of it."

"You would not be tired if you were accustomed to it, because it would come to you naturally, like eating, and drinking, and sleeping; and, besides, it prevents one from going on wrong all day."

"How do you mean?" asked Dora.

"Don't you know," replied Amy, "that when things are disagreeable in the morning, and one is put out of temper, it seems as if nothing would put one right again?"

"Well! yes," said Dora, rather impatiently; "go on."

"Then," continued Amy, "if I am cross, and the time comes for reading the psalms and lessons, or

going to church, or saying the prayer mamma gave me for the middle of the day, it stops me; because it seems so much more wicked to be cross in church, or when one is reading the Bible, than at any other time; and then I get better, and set off again fresh."

"That is the reason, I suppose," said Dora, "that you are never angry a whole day together, as a great many people are: but I cannot understand where you get the time for it all; does it never interfere with your walking or your lessons?"

"No," replied Amy, "because we reckon upon it beforehand; and when we are thinking of what is to be done in the day, we always remember that we shall be some time in church or reading the psalms and lessons; and mamma arranges so as not to let it interfere."

"But still you must be tired of it," persisted Dora: "it is quite impossible that you should go on, day after day, and not wish for a change. I am sure I get quite tired of going to church on Sundays; and I do not know what I should do if I were obliged to go every day."

"I don't like it always," replied Amy, while the colour mounted to her cheek; "and I know I do not attend half as I ought; but I am sure it makes the day go right, and mamma tells me it will be pleasanter to me every year; besides, I know that if it were not for going to church and reading with mamma and all that sort of thing, I should be so much more ill-tempered, and envious, and vain, than I am now, and then I should be wretched; for you don't know, Dora, what very bad feelings I have sometimes;" and the tears started into Amy's eyes as she spoke, at the recollection of the last Saturday evening.

Dora was silent: her own faults were so much greater than her cousin's, that Amy's self-reproach was more bitter than any reproof could possibly have

been. If Amy were so grieved at the remembrance of an impatient word, or a passing thought of vanity, what ought she to feel whose whole life had been one of pride and self-will. She felt, too, as if she had no right to attempt to comfort one who was so much better than herself; and stood for several moments looking at Amy with wonder and interest, till the striking of the clock recalled her to herself, and starting at the time they had spent together, she declared the day was half gone already, and there were a hundred things to be done before the people came.

"I had quite forgotten them," said Amy: "I think, Dora, I forget a great many things when I am talking to you."

"Do you?" said Dora, turning suddenly round to kiss her: "it cannot be any use to you to talk to me, because you have aunt Herbert to go to."

"I do like it though, so very much," answered Amy, "and I think about it afterwards; but I wish I could help you in amusing every one."

"I must leave them to their fate," said Dora, preparing to leave the room, "for mamma wants me, I know: but Amy," she added, stopping, and apparently desirous, yet unwilling to say more; "I wish—no never mind now."

"Oh! do tell it me," said Amy: "is it any thing I can do for you? I should be so glad."

"No, nothing, nothing," hastily repeated Dora, though her manner was at variance with her words.

"But you must tell me," said Amy, seizing her dress to prevent her going: "I am sure you mean something: can I look out some books, or put the room in order, or get any thing for you?"

"No, nothing of that kind; but, Amy, should you —should you very much mind letting me see the prayer aunt Herbert gave you?"

"Oh! if you would but let me give it you,"

exclaimed Amy, "for it is in mamma's handwriting; and I think you would like it all the better for that, and it is such a nice one: shall I go and fetch it?"

"I must not wait now," said Dora, "for I am after my time with mamma; but if you will put it in my room by-and-by, I should thank you so very much; and I shall always think of you when I look at it."

"And of mamma," said Amy; "and some day, perhaps, Dora, you will be able to talk to her as I do, and ask her any thing you want to know."

Dora shook her head, for she believed she never could be unreserved with any one but her cousin, and hastened to her mamma's room, with a longing desire that she could go to her for advice as Amy did to Mrs Herbert.

CHAPTER XVIII

DORA'S time was so fully occupied for the rest of the morning that she was quite unable to form any scheme of amusement; and three o'clock arrived, and with it carriage after carriage, each bringing an importation of visitors, before she had at all decided upon what was to be done with them. Frank had gone out with the young Dornfords, who came early, according to their engagement; and the three boys who arrived afterwards were immediately despatched to the lake to find him, and amuse themselves with skating.

"Boys are no trouble," thought Dora; "they always go out of doors, and take care of themselves: but girls"—— and she sighed as she looked upon the five young ladies who, dressed in their best silks and gayest bonnets, stood each by the side of her mamma, very silent, very shy, and very uncomfortable.

"You will take your young friends into the school-room, Dora," said Mrs Harrington, in her most gentle tone. "I suppose none of them will like walking such a cold afternoon as this: but you will find plenty of entertainment for them there; and with Margaret, and Miss Cunningham, and Amy, you will make quite a pleasant little party."

"There can be no doubt of that," said a tall, good-natured looking lady, who had brought her two little girls to pay their first visit from home. "In a house like this there is always something agreeable to be done; and then it is so pleasant for young people to be together. My children live in such retirement that it is an especial treat to them to have companions."

The two little girls clung more closely to their mother's side as she spoke, apparently thinking that the greatest treat at that moment would be to remain under her protection; but Dora led the way to the door, and they were obliged to follow, hand in hand, and casting imploring looks upon their mamma to persuade her to go with them. She half rose from her seat, but Mrs Harrington stopped her. "You need not be uneasy, Mrs Danvers," she said; "Dora will take great care of them."

"Oh! yes, of course, of course," repeated Mrs Danvers; "but they are so shy, poor children: I should just like to see how they manage to go on amongst so many strangers."

"Certainly," replied Mrs Harrington; "we will look in upon them by-and-by. Would you like to take a little walk before dinner, or should you prefer remaining in the house, as it is so cold?"

"I should be glad to know what the children will do," said poor Mrs Danvers, in a fever of anxiety for their enjoyment the moment they were out of her sight.

"We will inquire presently," persisted Mrs Harrington, who was always firm, even in trifling matters; and had made up her mind they should be left to themselves at first, to become acquainted with the rest of the party.

"If I could just ask them," said Mrs Danvers; "I daresay I could easily find my way to the school-room: where is it?"

"At the other end of the house," replied Mrs Harrington.

"Oh, just along the passages that we passed as we came in, I daresay."

"No, quite in a contrary direction. If you wish to know what your children prefer doing, Thomson shall ask for you."

Mrs Harrington rang the bell, and Thomson was

sent to the school-room, while Mrs Danvers sat pondering upon the extreme unpleasantness of being a visitor in the house of any lady who was determined to have her own way.

Amy was in the school-room, waiting for her cousins, and a little time was spent in introductions, and in discussing whether it was a pleasant afternoon, and whether the snow would be disagreeable if they went out on the terrace; and when at last it was decided to be very cold, and that they had thin shoes on, and that one was rather liable to cold, and another to cough, &c., Dora found they were resolutely bent on an afternoon in the house, and all that was to be done was to show them to their respective appartments to take off their bonnets and shawls, and to wish heartily that they would remain there till summoned to the drawing-room for the evening. Quickly, much more quickly than Dora had supposed possible, they appeared again, full of expectation that something was to happen which was to give them very great pleasure. The visit to Emmerton had been talked of for weeks before; it had been the subject of their thoughts by day, and their dreams by night; and the three school girls (Dora's particular dread), had exulted when they announced to their companions that a portion of the Christmas holidays was to be passed at Emmerton Hall. In former days Mr Harrington's family had been not only the richest, but the gayest in the county, and every one associated with the name of Emmerton visions of breakfast-parties, dinner-parties, riding-parties, music, balls, and every kind of festivity: and though too young to be admitted to all these pleasures, the young ladies had still a bright, but somewhat indistinct notion, that a visit at Emmerton must be the height of human enjoyment; whilst poor Dora was expected to realise all these gay expectations when she was dissatisfied with herself, unhappy at the recollection of

Wayland and her brother Edward, and with no one but Amy to assist in making every one comfortable.

A faint, despairing smile passed over her face as they entered, one after the other; and she cast a hopeless glance at Amy. Margaret had promised to appear, but Miss Cunningham considered it necessary to make some change in her dress, and her inseparable companion could not possibly leave her.

"You must have had a very cold drive," said Dora to the eldest Miss Stanley, a girl about her own age,—quiet, timid, and awed by the strangeness of every thing about her. It was the fourth time the observation had been made; and for the fourth time the same low, half-hesitating "Yes," was given in reply: but there the conversation ended, and Dora turned to her other visitors, hoping to find them more communicative. Unhappily her manner was such as to repel instead of encouraging them: she really wished to be kind and agreeable, but she did not for a moment for get that she was Miss Harrington of Emmerton Hall; and her efforts to be polite were so evident, and she was so very condescending in every thing she did and said, that it was impossible for the poor girls to be at ease.

Amy saw that her cousin was very different from what she usually was, but could not comprehend in what the change consisted, and only longed for her to leave off asking them if they liked music and drawing, and whether they preferred home or school, and how many brothers and sisters they had, and talk of something more interesting. Any thing would have been preferable to the formality of asking a string of questions; even she herself was a little chilled by Dora's manner, and only ventured to say a few words in an under-tone to a rather pretty, delicate girl, who stood by the fire near her. This most disagreeable constraint had lasted about ten minutes, when, to Amy's extreme satisfaction, Miss Morton's voice was heard in the pas-

sage, and almost immediately afterwards she entered, followed by Rose, laden with a doll nearly as large as herself, which she was only allowed to play with occasionally. She ran into the room with great glee, to exhibit her treasure to Amy, but shrank away on seeing so many strange faces: every one, however, seemed to feel her appearance an indescribable relief; the shy Miss Stanley stooped to kiss her, and ask how old she was; her sister begged to know the name of the doll; and Amy's friend was delighted to find in her a resemblance to a sister of about the same age; while the two younger children looked with envy and admiration upon the handsome pink frock and bright blue bonnet, which was always the holiday dress of the beautiful doll. But a greater charm than Rose and her doll was soon found in Emily Morton's manner. She went from one to the other, saying something kind to each, in a voice so sweet that it would have made even a common-place expression agreeable; and after a few trifling questions, which gave her some idea of their peculiar tastes and dispositions, she managed, by making observations of her own, to induce them to do the same; and listening with real and not forced interest to whatever was said, she led them on to describe their companions and their school life, till Dora found, to her surprise, that Hester Stanley, whom she had decided in her own mind to be almost devoid of intellect, and certainly unutterably dull, was a good French and Italian scholar, very fond of drawing, and farther advanced than herself in her acquaintance with books in general; that her sister was extremely amusing; and that Mary Warner had travelled on the Continent, and had many stories to tell of the peculiarities of foreign manners and customs. The younger children looked at Rose for a few minutes without speaking, then ventured to touch the doll, and at last, with one consent, seemed to resolve on being sociable, and

retired into a corner of the room to enact the parts of mamma, nurse, and doctor to the poor doll, who, in spite of her brilliant colour, was pronounced to be in a most dangerous state of health, and to require instant advice; while the party collected round the fire, growing bolder and bolder as the noise in the room increased, began at last so entirely to enjoy themselves, that when the dusk of the evening had stolen on them, and a proposition was made by the children for candles, there was a general petition for a few moments' respite, that they might have the luxury and freedom of talking by firelight prolonged. It was a strange contrast to the stiffness of the first half hour; and Dora hardly knew whether she quite approved of it; it seemed to throw her so completely in the background: but to Amy it was delightful. It was so new, and so interesting to hear a description of a school life, that she thought she could have listened for ever; and even Margaret and Miss Cunningham, who came into the room in the middle of one of Julia Stanley's most amusing stories, appeared to take some pleasure in what was passing. Margaret's interest was real; but Miss Cunningham's satisfaction arose from the comparison which she could make in her own mind between the splendour of Rochford Park and the very ordinary style of living to which her new acquaintances had been accustomed; and at every possible opportunity she broke out into exclamations of "Dear me! how strange! how very shabby! what a wretched place your school must be!" till she hoped she had fully convinced them of the fact, that the habits in which she had been brought up were immeasurably superior to theirs. Julia Stanley, however, was not at all awed by Miss Cunningham's grandeur: she continued her stories, talking very fast, and laughing heartily, and caring little what was thought as long as she could make others laugh also; but her sister was not equally

insensible; and every now and then she endeavoured to check the flow of Julia's spirits, and to suggest that the customs of their school were not entirely as she had represented.

"You must not believe every thing Julia tells you exactly," she said, turning to Miss Cunningham, who seemed quite unable to comprehend the fact of any young ladies being so ill-treated as to have no second course at dinner, no curtains to their beds, nor fires in their rooms: "she runs on so fast that she forgets. We always have puddings on Saturdays; and we have fires when we are ill; and there are curtains in the largest room, only we have never slept there."

"Well, then, bad is the best, is all that I can say for your school," said Miss Cunningham: "and as for ladies being brought up in such a way, how is it possible for them ever to know how to behave, if they are not taken more care of?"

"It must be very uncomfortable," said Dora: "but really I cannot see what a second course, and curtains, and fires have to do with manners."

"To be sure not," exclaimed Julia; "what does it signify? It is very hard and disagreeable sometimes, and we cry a good deal when first we go there —that is, some of the little ones do; but after a few weeks it is all right, and we eat our cold rice pudding, and think it delicious."

"Cold rice pudding!" repeated Amy, who had a peculiar dislike to it: "do you never have any thing but cold rice pudding?"

"Not very often," replied Julia; "but, as I said before, it really does not signify: I assure you, if you were up at six o'clock every day, as we are, and had nothing but hard lessons from morning till night, you would think cold rice pudding one of the nicest things you had ever tasted. I don't think I ever like any thing we have at home half as well."

"Well!" exclaimed Miss Cunningham, "I never heard of such a school before: all my notions were, that young ladies lived together, and learnt a few lessons, and had French and drawing masters, and ladies' maids, and carriages; that would be agreeable enough: but you might just as well be cottagers' children, if you live so shabbily: and what a difference it must make after your home! How you must miss your carriage and servants!"

"I do not," said Mary Warner: "we have no carriage."

"Not keep a carriage!" exclaimed Miss Cunningham; "then how do you manage to get from one place to another?"

"Really," interrupted Dora, "I do not think you should cross-question any one in that way: of course there are carriages to be had, even if people do not choose to keep them."

"There are coaches always passing near us," said Mary; "and so it is very convenient."

"Coaches!—you mean stage coaches, I suppose," said Miss Cunningham.

"Yes," replied Mary: "one of them goes to Sandham, where our school is; so there is no difficulty about my travelling."

"That is the strangest thing of all," said Miss Cunningham, "Do you mean really that your papa and mamma allow you to travel about the country in a stage coach?"

The tone in which this was said sounded even more disagreeable than the words; and Julia Stanley instantly took offence. "And why not?" she exclaimed; "why should not people ride in stage coaches if they like it?"

"Of course, if they like it," said Margaret, who was always willing to side with her friend; "but liking it is a very different thing from being obliged to do it."

"So it may be," replied Julia; "but almost every one does it now."

"I never do," said Miss Cunningham, pointedly.

"Very likely," answered Julia; "but then you are only one person; and almost all those I know go in stage coaches constantly; so you need not be so much surprised at Mary Warner."

Miss Cunningham pouted and drew up her head, and thought Julia one of the most forward impertinent girls she had ever met with; and Hester began to fear there must be something very derogatory to the dignity of a lady in travelling by a public conveyance: and yet remembering that once, when their own horses were lame, she had been obliged to avail herself of it, she could not with a clear conscience deny her acquaintance with them; she could, however, abuse them heartily, and lament the necessity which had induced their papa to allow it—quite agreeing with Margaret and Miss Cunningham, that it was not a common thing for people to do.

"Nonsense, Hester," exclaimed Julia; "you know as well as I do, that it is the most probable thing in the world that we shall go back to school by the coach; and what will your pride say to that?"

"Oh, papa mentioned something about it one day," replied Hester; "but of course he was not in earnest."

"But he was," answered Julia; "he said that now our cousins had left school, it would be a great expense for us to travel by ourselves, and that he should certainly put us into the stage coach, and let William take care of us, and then there would be no trouble about the matter. I wish," she added, turning to Amy, who stood next her, "that Hester would not try, as she always does, to make herself as grand and as fine as the people she is with."

Amy felt a slight pang of self-reproach as Julia spoke this; for when the conversation had first began, she felt she should not like to say as Mary Warner had done, that her papa and mamma did

not keep a carriage; and it appeared almost like deception to blame another for a fault she was conscious of herself. "I think," she said, in reply to Julia's observation, "that it is not right to wish to be just the same as other people; but I am afraid I should like it: and I am sure, indeed," she added with an effort, "that I should be glad to have a carriage to take me wherever I wanted to go."

"Then you have not one," said Julia: "that seems strange, being Mr Harrington's niece."

"My uncle's being rich, does not make any difference to us," was the answer, "except when we are staying here, and have the use of his things; but I think I should almost prefer being without them, because then I should not miss them."

"I used to think," said Julia, still speaking in a tone only to be heard by Amy, "that it signified a great deal about the way in which people lived till I knew Mary Warner; but she had such different notions that she made me think differently too."

"What notions?" asked Amy.

"Oh, I cannot tell you all now; but her papa was very rich—very rich indeed, and lived in a beautiful place: but in some way—I cannot quite understand how—he lost all his money, and was obliged to sell his property, and live in a much smaller house. If he had chosen, he might have had it all back again; but he is a very good man, and would not do something which he thought was not quite honourable; and so they continue living in the same inferior way, though no one, of course, thinks the worse of him for it, because every one says he has acted so nobly. This makes Mary care little for the change. She says her papa is so respected, and the is so fond of him, that it seems better to her than if they had all the fine places in the world."

Amy looked with interest at Mary as she heard this;

but she was not able to continue the conversation, for the servant entered with candles, and tea immediately followed; and after tea they were all to dress for the evening.

To Dora's satisfaction, it had been decided that the boys were to dine late, so she was spared the task of keeping them in order; and, finding that every one was beginning to feel comfortable and at home, her own dignity a little relaxed, and she began to think that after all, the infliction of a three days' visit from the school-girls might not be so very unendurable.

Amy hastened to her mother's room as soon as tea was over, in the hope of finding her there; for she had intended dining by herself, and appearing in the drawing-room only in the evening. "I must talk to you one minute, dear mamma," she said as she entered. "We have been getting on so nicely in the school-room—so much better than I expected, only it was dreadful just at first. They were so silent; and Dora looked like a duchess. If I had not been her cousin I should have laughed; but I fancied they would think I ought to entertain them, and that made me feel more shy than ever; and then they all spoke in such a low voice that every word I said was heard."

"Well!" answered Mrs Herbert; "but who broke the spell?"

"Miss Morton, mamma," replied Amy; "and I should like to understand what made her so different from Dora."

"She is much older," said Mrs Herbert; "naturally that would make a difference."

"It was not quite that," continued Amy: "for if it had been my aunt Harrington, I don't think we should have ventured to speak a word; but there was something in Miss Morton's manner that made every one appear at ease. Can you tell me what it was?"

"You must imagine me to be a fairy. How can I

possibly judge of what Miss Morton did when I was not present?"

"But can you not guess from her character?" asked Amy. "You have seen so much more of her lately, that I think you must know."

"At least, you are determined, as usual," said Mrs Herbert, smiling, "that I shall give you a reason for every thing which you cannot quite comprehend. I suspect, in the present instance, the secret consisted in Dora's thinking of herself all the time she was talking, and Miss Morton's thinking of others."

"That is not quite clear, mamma," replied Amy. "Does thinking of one's self make one stiff and formal?"

"Generally, either stiff or affected," replied Mrs Herbert; "yet it is very difficult to avoid doing it. You will often hear persons speaking of what are sometimes called 'company manners,'—not meaning exactly affectation, but a manner approaching to it, which is not quite natural; and it almost always arises from this same cause. It is, in fact, very nearly allied to selfishness; for we care so much more for ourselves than others that we take a greater interest in thinking of ourselves than of them, and so we become disagreeable."

"But how can we help it?" asked Amy.

"By trying, every day of our lives, to consult the happiness of those we live with," answered Mrs Herbert. "I mean, in the merest trifles, such as giving up a pleasant seat, or an amusing book, or fetching things for them to save them trouble, or listening to them when they wish to talk to us. By these means we can acquire a habit of forgetting ourselves, which will remain with us whether we are in company or only with our own family."

Amy listened to her mother with an earnest wish to follow her advice; and when she joined the party

in the drawing-room she found immediate opportunities of putting it in practice.

The evening was a cheerful one, for Mr Harrington proposed some Christmas games, and insisted upon every one's joining them: and although Dora and Miss Cunningham held back, and thought themselves too old and too dignified, they were at length obliged to yield; and the rest of the party were so merry that they did not notice their grave looks and slow movements. Amy enjoyed herself thoroughly; and when her gay laugh caught Mrs Herbert's ear, it gave her more happiness than she had felt for many months, since she could now venture to dwell on the delight which Colonel Herbert would experience on seeing her so entirely what he could most have desired his child to be. Dora was almost jealous as she noticed the regard which Amy attracted, and wondered what the secret could be. Perhaps, if she had followed her cousin's example, and given up a seat to Mary Warner when she was tired, and assisted Hester Stanley when her sandal broke, and soothed one of the children when she fell down and was frightened, she too might have been a favourite: but without intending to be unkind, she managed so openly to show her dislike to what was going on, that every one endeavoured to keep aloof from her; and if they did speak, the answer was so cold, and the manner so proud, that the wish to make another attempt was impossible.

CHAPTER XIX.

When Amy met her new acquaintance the next morning, after having thought them over attentively while she was dressing, she had quite decided on the one she liked best. Julia Stanley had at first amused her so much, and was so very lively and good tempered, that it seemed impossible not to give the preference to her: but even then there was something in her quick manner and hasty expressions which rather annoyed Amy's feelings, when contrasted with Miss Morton's gentleness and refinement; and in the course of the evening, as she observed her more narrowly, her conduct to Miss Cunningham had struck her as peculiarly disagreeable. It required but very little time to perceive Miss Cunningham's deficiencies; and Julia, who was remarkably quick and clever, had not been in her company for half an hour before she had discovered them; and her great amusement was to turn every thing she said into ridicule. For the first few minutes Amy had been amused; but afterwards an endeavour of Emily Morton's to check some satirical observations, had shown her that she was wrong; and a sense of politeness soon made her aware that Julia allowed cleverness and high spirits to carry her beyond the bounds of propriety. When Dora gave Miss Cunningham what Frank would have called "a set-down," it was done in a lady-like way, as far as manner was concerned. She delighted in saying the most pointed things in the most pointed tone, yet she would, on no account, have neglected the little attentions which Miss Cunningham's position demanded: but Julia Stanley, feeling herself infinitely superior to Lord Rochford's

daughter in intellect and accomplishments, considered that she was, on this account, freed from any demands upon her politeness; and had made no scruple of pushing into a room before her, interrupting her when speaking, and endeavouring to show that she did not consider her as entitled to any respect or attention. All this was peculiarly disagreeable to Amy, who, having always lived with persons who were polite upon christian principles, could not in the least comprehend the rudeness of self-conceit; and if Julia had offended her in one way, her sister's manner had been equally unpleasant in another. She had been Miss Cunningham's shadow and echo; she had followed her from place to place, admiring her dress and her ornaments, and begging her to describe Rochford Park, and hinting how much she should like to see it; and once or twice she had turned to Amy to extort her admiration also, when sincerity had obliged her entirely to differ.

A little of the same flattery had also been bestowed upon Dora, but it was received so coolly, that there was no temptation to repeat it a second time; for Dora, though she loved praise and flattery, still required it to be administered delicately, through the medium of a third person; and fancied herself insensible to it, because she never encouraged any one to tell her, in direct terms, that she was beautiful and clever. Mary Warner's manner resembled neither; it was not quite so polished as Amy would have liked, but it was simple and straightforward. She had never seen any place so beautiful as Emmerton, and she said so plainly; but she also said that she thought there were too many trees about it; and she should have preferred the house being built higher. It was the same with every thing else; she expressed her opinion when asked without reserve; but she did not, like Julia, intrude disagreeable observations uncalled for, nor, like Hester, pretend

to see beauties where there was nothing to admire. The uprightness of her father's character seemed to have descended to her; and Amy willingly forgave any little awkwardness of manner when she saw Mary's firmness and simplicity; while even Dora was rather won by the unconcern with which she listened to Miss Cunningham's impertinences, and the openness with which she acknowledged the inferiority of her own home to Emmerton—apparently thinking it a matter of indifference whether she lived in a large house or a small one. It was a point of character which Dora could appreciate and admire, though it was not one she thought it necessary to imitate. But Miss Cunningham felt very differently; and her good humour was not at all increased by the failure of her endeavours to inspire both Julia and Mary with awe and admiration: and to complete her discomfort, when breakfast was over, Miss Morton gently proposed her practising for half an hour; adding that Lord Rochford had again mentioned the subject, and begged that she would assist her in perfecting the piece she had been trying, so that it might be played in the evening. Miss Cunningham did not speak, but she looked her thoughts, and yet she did not venture to rebel; for Lord Rochford, with all his fondness, had some particularities; and the arrangement of his daughter's studies was his peculiar hobby. It seemed, however, as if she had secretly resolved that the pleasures of a London journey should not be marred by any progress she might make under Miss Morton's tuition; and bad as her performance had been before, it was much worse this morning. Miss Morton, with unwearied patience, corrected her false notes, asked her to repeat the difficult passages, and showed her, again and again, how they were to be played; but the long, stiff fingers appeared to possess some innate spirit of obstinacy; they would move exactly in the way in which they should not have

moved; they would play sharps for flats, and turn crotchets into quavers, and minims into crotchets; until Amy, who, with the exception of Julia Stanley, was the only person present besides, wondered how it was possible for Miss Morton to persevere; and Julia, after a pretended attempt to conceal her amusement, laughed aloud. Miss Cunningham heard the laugh, and felt it keenly, and forgetting every thing but her annoyance, she jumped up from her seat, closed the book, and, without speaking, rushed out of the room.

"Well! that is delightful," exclaimed Julia; "I would have laughed before, if I had thought it would bring matters to a conclusion."

Amy wished to say something, but she felt painfully shy, for she had begun to dread Julia's satire; and, happily for her, Emily Morton spoke instead.

"I should be very sorry," she said, "to believe you in earnest; you would hardly acknowledge so openly that you took pleasure in hurting the feelings of another."

"Only she took pleasure in hurting my ears," replied Julia.

"Not intentionally," said Miss Morton: "but I am sure you cannot really mean what you say; you must be sorry for having given pain."

"Miss Cunningham is so very silly," persisted Julia, who was never willing to confess herself in the wrong; "it really is impossible to help laughing at her. You know there can be no harm in being amused at people's folly."

"I cannot agree with you at all," said Emily; "and as to Miss Cunningham's sense, it is not her own choice to be less clever than others."

"To be sure not," exclaimed Julia, pertly: "who would be stupid if they could help it? But it does not make people at all the less absurd, because it is not their own fault."

"There again I must differ from you," replied Emily. "It makes all the difference possible. Self-conceit, and vanity, and pride may be ridiculous, but not mere deficiency of understanding: it is the appointment of God, just as much as poverty or illness may be: and I think, from something I heard you say yesterday, you would not be at all inclined to laugh at any one who had less money than yourself."

"Oh, no! certainly not," said Julia: "but cleverness is quite a different thing. I do so like bright, clever people; and I do so delight in laughing at stupid ones. All the world think more of cleverness than of any thing else."

"But it does not follow that all the world are right," replied Emily.

"But a great many strict people that I know think so," said Julia. "I very often hear some friends of ours say—such a person is not quite right, but then he is so clever; and it does make up for a great many things: you must own that."

"Indeed I cannot own it," replied Emily; "I do not see that it makes up for anything."

"But don't you like it?" asked Julia, in a tone of great surprise.

"Yes, very much,—just as I like to see a pretty face, or to listen to beautiful music; but I do not esteem it. I mean," she added, observing that Julia continued silent from astonishment, "that I do not think it forms part of a person's character, any more than his houses or his clothes do."

"But have you no value at all for it?" said Julia.

"Yes," replied Emily; "and so I have for riches; both may be made the instruments of good: but I do not value a person who is rich, because he is rich; neither do I value a person who is clever, because he is clever. If the rich man turns his riches to good account, I value him for his generosity and self-denial;

and if the clever man uses his talents well, I value him because I see he is trying to serve God: but I should have just as much esteem for a poor man, or a man with inferior understanding, if they were equally good."

"But," said Julia, "all the celebrated people one reads of were not good, and yet there is just as much fuss made about them now as if they were angels: every one talks of them and praises them."

"Yes," replied Miss Morton, gravely, and then paused as if lost in her own thoughts.

"What were you going to say?" asked Amy.

"I did not like to say what was in my mind," replied Emily; "it is so very painful: but, you know, the opinions of men can be nothing when a person is dead."

Julia seemed struck with the observation, but did not speak, for she began to feel ashamed, and was endeavouring to summon courage to confess herself in the wrong. "I wish you would go on talking," she said, after the silence had continued for several minutes; "but then you think me so rude that perhaps you will not take the trouble."

"It is not what I think, but what Miss Cunningham thinks, which is of importance," replied Miss Morton: "you have not been rude to me."

"Well! I was not quite polite perhaps, only really I could not help it. Shall I beg her pardon?"

"No!" exclaimed Emily, "pray do not do that; it would only make matters worse, because you must own then that you thought her ridiculous."

"But what shall I do?" asked Julia.

"Will you let me tell you without thinking I am interfering?" said Emily.

"Oh! yes, pray do. You know, at school every one speaks their mind, so I am quite accustomed to it."

"Well, then! I should recommend you to begin

by keeping a strict guard over yourself for the rest of the day, that you may not be guilty of the same fault again, and not to force yourself upon Miss Cunningham, but to show her quietly a few little attentions; and if she is proud and annoyed, to try and feel that it is only what you have brought upon yourself, and therefore not to be angry with her."

"But that is not the least in my way," said Julia, "I could go just at this minute and say I am sorry, because I am in the humour; and I should be rather glad to make it up and be friends again, though she is so silly: but as for going on all day paying little attentions to a person who has not a single idea in her head, it is what I never did and never can do."

"Never will, you mean," replied Miss Morton. "We often say *can*, when we ought to say *will*."

"Well! can or will," exclaimed Julia: "it is all the same; only if I may beg Miss Cunningham's pardon now, I don't care: but if I must not do that, she must take her chance; and if she makes herself ridiculous, I must laugh at her."

"Because you think yourself cleverer," said Miss Morton: "is not that the reason?"

Julia blushed deeply: she was not accustomed to have her self-conceit brought before her so plainly, and yet she was too candid not to see the truth of what was said.

"I do not mean to pain you," continued Miss Morton, very kindly. "Perhaps it is not my place to interfere; but you promised not to be annoyed: and you must forgive me if I remind you, that in the sight of God the most trifling act of self-denial from a really high motive—I mean, of course, from a wish to please him—is infinitely more valuable than the cleverest thing that has ever been said or done since the world was made."

Still Julia was silent; her cleverness did not at

that moment come to her aid: and after gazing attentively upon the fire, playing with the ornaments on the mantelpiece, and turning over the leaves of one or two books, she found herself so very uncomfortable, that, hastily exclaiming she must go and look for her sister, she left Amy and Miss Morton alone.

"Are you vexed?" asked Amy, as soon as the door was closed. "You look so."

"I am, rather," said Miss Morton, "for I am half-afraid I have done more harm than good; and I am hurt especially about Miss Cunningham, because I know it was very disagreeable to her to have any lesson at all; and such a one as this will make her dislike it more than ever."

"But not you," observed Amy; "she cannot blame you for another person's rudeness."

"Only it is difficult," said Miss Morton, "to feel kindly towards those who have been the cause of placing us in awkward situations: and I do not suspect I have ever been a favourite with Miss Cunningham."

"I wish Miss Stanley had kept to her own room this morning," said Amy. "I am afraid she will spoil our pleasure all day."

"Oh! no; she will soon forget it all: and I do not think she will take Miss Cunningham's anger much to heart; it will rather amuse her than otherwise."

"I should not like her to be amused at me," said Amy: "she frightens me dreadfully. I felt just now as if I could not have ventured to speak before her."

"I must give you a lecture too," said Emily, smiling. "Why should you be afraid of people merely because they are clever, and say sharp things? It is making cleverness of as much consequence as Miss Stanley does; besides being a dangerous feeling, and one which often prevents us from doing our duty."

"Ah! but," said Amy, "I cannot feel quite as you do. I always have thought a great deal about it, and

longed to be very clever myself, and for every one to admire me, and look up to me."

"And I have done the same," said Emily. "I will not say that I never do so now; but it is very contrary to what the Bible commands."

"Do you really think so?" inquired Amy, looking much distressed. "Yet it seems so natural; and cleverness is different from riches, or rank, or any thing of that kind."

"Can you recollect any part of the Bible in which it is said that God takes pleasure in it?" asked Emily.

"There is a great deal about wisdom in the Book of Proverbs," answered Amy; "and it is said to be better than any thing else."

"Yes," replied Emily: "but then, you know, we ought to compare different parts of the Bible together, if we wish to know its real meaning. And there is a verse at the end of a very beautiful chapter in the Book of Job, which tells us what wisdom really is: perhaps you may remember it. It says, 'The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.' Now, a poor man who cannot even read may have just as much of this wisdom as the most learned man that ever lived."

"Then," said Amy, "there is no use in trying to learn things."

"Indeed," replied Miss Morton, "there is. It is our duty to improve the understanding God has given us to the utmost, by exercising it in every right way. Our Saviour's parable of the talents gives a most impressive warning to us on this point, though talents there mean likewise advantages of every kind; and besides, the more we know, the more we are able to teach others."

Amy still looked unconvinced; and Emily continued. "You will see what I mean, if you will think of being clever in the same way as you do of being rich. We

all know that it is the way of the world to value people for their money, but common sense tells us that it is very absurd; and yet no one would deny that riches may be made of great use to our fellow-creatures, though they do not make us in the smallest degree more acceptable in the eye of God. I wish I could explain myself more clearly: perhaps, if I were very clever, I might be able to do it; and then, you see, my knowledge would be of use to you, though it would not make me either better or worse in myself."

"I think that is clever," said Amy, laughing; "for I can understand you much better now, though I am afraid I shall never learn to think rightly about every thing."

"You must not say that," said Emily. "You know you are not very old yet; and if we thought about everything rightly at the beginning of our life, it would not be necessary for us to have so many years to learn in. As long as we are not standing still, we may be tolerably happy, though we do happen to blunder in the dark way."

"I think I am always blundering," said Amy; "at least I know I am always wishing for something which mamma and you tell me I ought not to wish for: but I think it is because I hear Dora and Margaret and Miss Cunningham talking so much about such things. You know Dora makes a great deal of being clever, and Miss Cunningham is always speaking of rank and riches, and Margaret is so pleased to be pretty. I know it is really all nothing; but when I hear them I cannot help longing for it all, and thinking that it must be of consequence."

"Yes," said Miss Morton, "it is very natural. This place is to you just what the world is to grown-up people."

"I remember," replied Amy, "thinking something just like that the very first night my cousins came;

but I did not imagine," she added, "that there would be any one in my world like you."

Miss Morton could have answered, with truth, that she had never expected to meet with any one like Amy at Emmerton; but at that moment Dora and the rest of the party entered, and Miss Cunningham with them.

"Must you go?" whispered Amy, as Miss Morton prepared to leave the room.

Emily replied that she had letters to write, which would keep her engaged the whole morning; and Amy scarcely wished her to remain, when she observed the expression of Miss Cunningham's face, and saw that her good humour was by no means restored.

It was not indeed a very easy task at any time; and Julia Stanley seemed resolved that this morning it should be more difficult than ever. She had given up the idea of confessing her fault, and trying to make amends, because she could not have her own way as to the manner in which it should be done, and had become angry with herself, and, as a natural consequence, angry with every one else. There was, in fact, a regular feud between her and Miss Cunningham; and Dora soon saw that to preserve peace would be a difficult matter. Julia's manner was more sharp and abrupt than ever, as she took every opportunity of repeating Miss Cunningham's words, and turning them into ridicule; while Miss Cunningham, on her part, endeavoured to make sneers and scornful looks as effective as words. Amy was very uncomfortable, and once or twice tried to divert their attention by talking to the younger children, and making them bring their dolls and playthings to the table where the elder girls were working. But her efforts were in vain; and, as a last hope, she ventured to suggest to Dora, that perhaps it might be pleasant if some one were to read out. The idea was the greatest possible relief to poor Dora, for all her antipathy to strange school-girls, and

three days' visits, was returning in full force; and having asked, as a matter of form, whether any one would dislike it, she quickly produced half-a-dozen volumes to choose from.

The choice being settled, the next question to be decided was, who should read. There was a general burst of excuses as the inquiry was made. Every one would read, only there was a piece of work to be finished, or a drawing to be begun, or some beads to be threaded, or they were so soon tired that it was quite useless to begin, or they were suffering from a cold and hoarseness, which would make it disagreeable for the rest to listen. Dora put down the book on the table, considering it, as a matter of course, that she should not be obliged to do it. She had seldom been called on to give up her own will for others, but had always ordered and managed, and told others their duty; and when this was done, her part was considered finished. So, in the present instance, she had decided it would be a good thing to read, and had chosen the book, and supposed that some one would easily be found willing to amuse the rest. But Dora was mistaken.

The only person who had not excused herself was the only one whose excuse would have been really a good one. Poor Amy's heart beat fast as she thought that it might fall to her lot to read. She had never read aloud to any one but her mamma; and she was the youngest of the party; and, moreover, she knew that in the book which had been fixed on there were some long French quotations, which must be pronounced or translated, either alternative being equally disagreeable. "I wish I could read," she whispered to Margaret, who was sitting next her; "but I am so frightened."

"Oh! it does not signify," answered Margaret aloud; "there is no occasion for us to trouble ourselves

—Emily Morton will come directly; I have known her go on for hours when mamma has been ill."

"Yes," said Dora, feeling slightly uncomfortable as she spoke, "she is much more used to it than we are. Rose, go and tell Emily Morton that we should be very much obliged if she could read out to us this morning whilst we are working."

The message was more civil than it would have been some months before; and Dora's conscience was rather relieved: but to Amy it seemed only selfish and thoughtless.

"Miss Morton told me she had letters to write, Dora," she said, timidly. "Don't you think reading to us would be an interruption to her?"

"Not more than giving us our usual lessons," observed Margaret; "it is only occupying the same time in a different way."

"But," replied Amy, "indeed I think the letters are of consequence; and the post goes out so early."

"Well, then, Amy," said Dora, rather sharply, "if you will insist upon our not sending for Emily, you must read yourself, for you are the only one of us all who is not busy."

Amy was busy finishing a purse to be given to Mrs Walton on her birth-day; but anything was better than to allow Miss Morton's time to be intruded on; and although the slight trembling of her hand, and the bright crimson spot on her cheek, showed the greatness of the effort, she did manage to begin, and even to get through the first long French sentence without breaking down. Dora listened to the words, but they made very little impression; she was thinking all the time of her own selfishness, and how easy it was to make good resolutions, and how very difficult to keep them. It was only on that very day that she had been reflecting on her conduct to Miss Morton, and had determined to be more thoughtful for her comfort; and

now, on the first temptation, she had weakly given way, and, but for Amy, would have sacrificed Miss Morton's whole morning merely to gratify her own fancy for work. Happily, Dora's was not a mind to be contented with the bare acknowledgment of having been wrong; it was too active and energetic to rest in fruitless wishes for amendment; and now, finding that Amy's voice was becoming weak, and that she read with difficulty, she threw down her work just as she was about to put the finishing stroke to it, and offered to read instead. It was but a trifling action, but it made Dora feel happier than she had been before: it proved to herself that she was in earnest; and when she had made one endeavour it was much easier to make another. Her manner grew softer, her thoughtfulness for others increased; and before the morning was over, she had even taken Miss Cunningham's part against Julia Stanley, when she had made an observation on the book they were reading, and had given up her seat near the fire, fearing she might be cold. The book was so interesting, and the oriel room so comfortable, that no one thought of the time or the weather; and when Mrs Harrington made her appearance with Mrs Danvers, and begged them all to go out before dinner that they might not lose the best part of the day, there was a slight murmur of disapprobation. Mrs Danvers sympathised, and pitied, and declared the room looked so warm and cheerful, it was almost impossible to leave it: now she had once found her way there, she should be a frequent visitor.

"I always think young people manage best when left to themselves," said Mrs Harrington. "Dora, you must be quick, and go out; and as many of your young friends as choose to go with you had better get ready also."

The sending them out did not seem like leaving them to themselves: but Mrs Harrington's manner

prevented almost every one from differing from her; and Mrs Danvers, who was rather young, and soon awed, said nothing, but began fondling her little girls, and proposing to stay and play with them if they liked it better than going for a walk; whilst Dora, who knew the exact meaning of every word and tone of her mother's, hastily put up her work, and prepared to obey.

CHAPTER XX.

"MARGARET," said Miss Cunningham, who had joined the walking party merely from not knowing how to employ her time satisfactorily while they were away, "I want you to talk to me a little: never mind the rest, they will manage very well; and really what I have to say is of consequence."

"Is it, indeed?" replied Margaret, who dearly loved a little mystery; "but you must be quick, for Dora said so much to me, before we came out, about being attentive to them all."

"It cannot signify what Dora says; she is not to rule every one; at least I am sure she shall not rule me. But what I wanted to say to you was about London. I talked to papa this morning; and he says, after all, he thinks there is a chance of your going."

"Oh, no! he cannot really mean it; mamma was so very positive the other night."

"Yes, I know that; but it is something about Mrs Herbert which makes the difference. Your papa thinks her very ill, and he wants to have advice for her; and if Dr Bailey does not give a good report, he will try and persuade her to go, and then all the family are to go too."

"Well, that would be delightful; but the time would not suit you—it will be so soon."

"But if you were to go at once, papa would not object to being there earlier himself, for he is determined that we shall have lessons together."

"So then it is all settled," said Margaret, her eyes sparkling with pleasure. "To be sure, I am sorry for poor Amy, but I daresay there is nothing very

much the matter; and with a London physician aunt Herbert will soon get well."

"I don't think it is settled at all," answered Miss Cunningham; "for I can tell you one thing, Margaret,—I never will go to London to be pestered by Miss Morton; she must stay at home, or I must. If you had only seen how she behaved this morning; she found as much fault with my playing as if I had been a mere baby."

"But," said Margaret, looking much perplexed, "there is no help for it; she must go with us; only it does not follow that you should learn of her."

"It does follow, though," replied Miss Cunningham, angrily: "how can you be so stupid, Margaret? I have told you a hundred and fifty times before, that if papa once has a thing in his head, not all the world can drive it out: and he said this morning that I should have lessons of her besides the other masters; but I won't,—no, that I won't."

"That is right," said Margaret: "if you make a fuss about it, you will be sure to have your own way."

"But my way is to stay at home; I can do that if I choose, for mamma will like it; but I will never go near London to be laughed at by rude vulgar people as I was this morning; so you may manage as well as you can without me."

Miss Cunningham walked on a few steps with her head raised, rapidly twisting the bag she held in her hand—a sure sign that she was working herself into a passion. Margaret followed, appearing very downcast, and feeling that Lucy's determination would prove the destruction of all her bright castles in the air. London, with only her own family, would be nearly as bad as Emmerton. "What do you wish me to do?" she said, anxiously.

"Nothing," was the reply; "but make up your

mind to go without me, for I am quite determined: I can be as obstinate as papa, sometimes."

This could not be doubted; but it was no satisfaction to Margaret. "It is very unkind of you, Lucy," she said. "You sometimes tell me you love me; and yet you don't seem inclined to put yourself in the least out of your way to please me. You know very well that there will be no pleasure in London if you are away; we shall go nowhere and see nothing."

"Yes, I know it; but it can't be helped."

"That odious Emily Morton!" exclaimed Margaret; "she has been a torment in one way or another ever since she entered the house."

"And she will never be any thing else," said Miss Cunningham: "I wish you joy of her."

"But is there nothing to be done?" again asked Margaret, whilst several most impracticable plans passed quickly through her mind, all having for their object the removal of this serious obstacle to her enjoyment.

"I can see nothing," was the answer; "unless you can make her go and see her friends whilst you are absent."

"I don't think she has any friends," said Margaret, "except an aunt, who is abroad; that is, she has never asked to go away, so I suppose she has no place to go to."

"That makes the case a great deal worse. If she has no friends you may depend upon it you will be burdened with her for ever."

"I believe, though," said Margaret, "there is a Mrs or Miss Somebody, who was her governess once, who could keep her for some time: but then, you know, it is no use talking about it; there is no chance of our being able to do any thing."

"The loss will be more yours than mine," replied Miss Cunningham: "it will be just the same to me next year; but you will miss every thing."

"Yes, every thing," sighed Margaret.

"You would have gone to the opera, certainly; papa would have taken you there, and you would have been out half the day shopping, and driving in the parks; and you would have seen every thing, and bought any thing you wished,—for, of course, your papa would have given you plenty of money to do as you liked with; and then my aunt would have taken us to some delightful parties. But it is not worth while to think about it now; because if you go for your aunt's illness, and have no one to take you about, you will be at your lessons half the day, and staying at home with her the other half; and there will be nothing to be seen, because you must choose such a very quiet part of the town for an invalid."

"Oh, Lucy!" said Margaret, "I wish you would not talk so. It is very unkind; for you know it will be all your doing."

"My doing! No, indeed, I can't help it. Get rid of Miss Morton, and I will go directly. And now I have said all I wished, and so I think I shall turn back, for you told me you wanted to go to Dora; and really I have had quite enough of those school-girls this morning."

Margaret did not press her to stay, for she was becoming very indignant: but neither was she inclined to make any exertions to be agreeable; and, soon persuading herself that the walking party had advanced too far for her to overtake them, she rather sulkily turned back and followed Miss Cunningham, keeping, however, at a convenient distance, that she might be able to think over the conversation, and find some arguments which should induce her to break the resolution she had formed.

Amy, in the meantime, enjoyed her walk with her companions in perfect unconsciousness that any thing was near to disturb her happiness. She laughed at

Julia Stanley's strange stories, till she forgot by degrees she had been afraid of her; and although every tree and stone were familiar, there was a pleasure in pointing out to strangers all the beauties of the grounds, even in their wintry dress: and good humour being proverbially infectious, the whole party returned home in all the better spirits, that they had been spared Miss Cunningham's sulkiness and pride. The first news, however, that awaited Amy upon entering the house, was the information from Susan Reynolds that Mr Harrington had prevailed on her mamma to see Dr Bailey. Amy started and turned pale, and anxiously asked if her mamma were very ill.

"Oh, dear! no," replied Susan, frightened in her turn; "but I thought you would be glad to know your mamma was going to see a doctor, because then, perhaps, she will get strong again."

"Yes; but she must be worse, I am sure," said Amy: "she never would send for any one unless she were very ill indeed." And without waiting to hear more, she hastily ran to Mrs Herbert's room. But her fears were soon calmed. Mrs Herbert was looking much the same as usual, and seemed in tolerable spirits, and quite laughed at Amy's alarm.

"I have only consented to see Dr Bailey," she said, "just to satisfy your uncle: and it was very foolish in any one to frighten you, my dear child, so unnecessarily; so now go to your dinner, and forget me, and be happy."

"That would not be the way to be happy, mamma: I never enjoy any thing till I have remembered that I can tell you about it. But are you sure you are not very ill?"

"I am quite sure that I am not feeling worse than I have done for the last six weeks," replied Mrs Herbert; "and I suspect the sight of your papa's handwriting would do more towards my cure than all

the physicians in the world. I hoped to have heard from him by the same mail which brought the news of peace."

"Perhaps," said Amy, "the letter will come to-morrow."

"Oh, no!" replied Mrs Herbert; "it is scarcely possible: I must be contented to wait. But you had better go now, Amy—there is the second dinner-bell."

Amy left the room much relieved. A natural buoyancy of disposition seldom allowed her to be unnecessarily anxious: she was too young to form any judgment of her own respecting the state of her mother's health: and Mrs Herbert's assurances outweighed the passing influence of her uncle's misgivings. She did, however, look oftener than ever to the door during the evening, with a vague expectation that her father would appear: and she persuaded Mr Cunningham to repeat again to her all he had before said of the probability of his arrival at any moment; while Mrs Herbert, also, listened eagerly, and laughed at herself for being as fanciful as Amy, though her heart beat quickly at the slightest unusual sound in the house.

"There is the second day happily over, Amy," said Dora, as she bade her good night: "and now I have no more fears; we shall do very well to-morrow. Frank has been proposing for us all to assist in ornamenting the outer saloon for the conjurer, and Mary Warner can show us how to make artificial flowers; so we shall have plenty of occupation: and in the evening I really think we may make up a quadrille. You know there are several people coming besides; and Emily Morton will play as long as we like. The only thing that worries me is about Julia and Lucy Cunningham; they are exactly like cat and dog."

"I daresay we can manage to keep them separate," replied Amy. "If Margaret will take care of Miss Cunningham, there will be no difficulty at all."

"But they will get together," said Dora. "And really, though I do cordially dislike—not hate, remember, Amy,—though I do cordially dislike Lucy Cunningham, yet I must say Julia behaves infamously; she has been snapping at her the whole evening; and, moreover, almost laughed at Mr Cunningham to her face."

"Oh, no!" exclaimed Amy, "she could not do that; it would be so dreadfully unfeeling."

"But she could, though,—she could do that or any thing else that came to her head. You know she sets up for being clever, and thinks she may have every thing her own way. I wish you would talk to her, Amy."

"Me!" repeated Amy, in a tone of the utmost surprise: "you are laughing at me, Dora."

"No, indeed, I never was more in earnest in my life. I heard her say to-day she thought you knew more of what was right than any one else in the house, and had more courage too."

Amy was silent from astonishment.

"It is your quiet way, Amy, which strikes her so, I am sure," continued Dora: "you never make a fuss about being good-natured, and yet you always do every thing for every body; and I am sure they must all see it, and love it too—at least if they are like me. There is always a difficulty when any one else is good-natured, they seem to have achieved something."

"You know, Dora," replied Amy, gravely, "that I always ask you not to say such things to me, but you will forget. I don't mean that I don't like it, because I do very much; but mamma would rather I should not hear them, and so it vexes me."

"Vex you!" exclaimed Dora, earnestly, "if you knew half I would do to please you, Amy, you would not talk of my vexing you, at least not willingly; I never could have believed before I came to Emmerton,

how painful I should find it to be unkind to any one; but now I can never forgive myself when I have been cross to you."

The tears rose to Amy's eyes as she wished her cousin good night and hastened away; but the expression of Dora's affection amply rewarded her for any impatience she had repressed, or self-denial she had practised.

CHAPTER XXI.

DORA was quite satisfied the next morning when she saw the whole party engaged in decorating the saloon for the evening's amusement. Frank and his companions, indeed, were at times rather more troublesome than useful, from the very zeal with which they engaged in the work. They would put up boughs of evergreens where they were not needed, and insist on driving in a superabundance of nails, and they would also strew the floor with enormous branches, which only served as stumbling-blocks for every one who moved. But these were minor evils; all talked fast, and laughed merrily, and looked happy; and those who have ever had the responsibility of entertaining others, must be aware that no symptoms can be so encouraging as these. Miss Cunningham might perhaps have been considered an exception; for there was something like a sneer on her lip, as she seated herself by Margaret's side at the table that had been placed for the flower makers, and began turning over the collection of roses, tulips, and lilies, of every form and colour, which far outshone in variety any that nature has produced. "I should like to know," she said, "what is the use of your all wasting time in this way? what will be the good of it when you have done?"

"It is for our pleasure," replied Julia Stanley, sharply; "and as to wasting time, why it is better than doing nothing."

"Such common, vulgar work, too," continued Miss Cunningham; "and all for a conjurer."

"Who said we were working for the conjurer?"

asked Julia; "I said we were working to please ourselves."

"Then it seems to me very absurd to find pleasure in such nonsense," said Miss Cunningham.

"That is as people think; I see no difference between cutting out flowers and threading beads, which I think you were doing all yesterday; and if you do not like the work, you need not look at it."

"I am sure I do not want to look at that or the conjurer, or any thing else," said Miss Cunningham, "tricks are far too vulgar to please me."

"But what do you mean by vulgar?" asked Dora.

"Vulgar—why vulgar means—every one knows what it means."

"No," said Mary Warner, in her quick decided tone; "every one does not know what it means, because no two people in the world think quite alike about it."

"Dear me! how silly you are!" exclaimed Miss Cunningham; "vulgar!—vulgar means common, I suppose."

"Then the conjurer is not vulgar, because his tricks are uncommon," said Julia.

Miss Cunningham bit her lips and was silent; and Amy, who was becoming interested in the discussion, turned to Miss Morton, who had just entered the room, and asked her to tell them what things she thought were vulgar.

"What a request!" said Julia; "Miss Morton might go on all day, and she would not be able to answer it. You have not been taught to ask questions, that is quite clear."

Poor Amy looked confused, and said, timidly, that she thought she had expressed herself badly.

"I know what you mean, though," replied Miss Morton, who had of late ventured more openly to express her opinions, especially when called forth by

Amy: "I don't think any thing vulgar in itself, but only when it is not befitting the rank and station of the person concerned."

Miss Cunningham opened her eyes widely, and looked as if she would willingly have understood; and Amy begged Miss Morton to explain herself more clearly.

"Conjuring tricks," she asked, "are they vulgar?"

Miss Morton smiled. "I hope," she said, "you are not growing too proud to be amused; why should such a notion enter your head?"

"Miss Cunningham thinks them so," replied Amy.

"If Miss Cunningham were to exhibit them herself to any people that might choose to come and look at them," answered Miss Morton, "I should have reason to think her vulgar; but the poor conjurer is a common person who gains his livelihood by his ingenuity. There can be nothing more vulgar in his exhibition of tricks (if they are proper ones I mean), than in a carpenter's making a table, or a tailor's making a coat."

"Really," exclaimed Miss Cunningham, "you have most extraordinary ideas. I exhibit conjuring tricks, indeed! I wonder how the notion could ever have entered your head."

"It is strange," said Julia Stanley, quietly; "conjurers are generally clever."

Miss Cunningham did not immediately perceive what was intended; but Hester did, and in her endeavour to be polite in contrast to her sister, contrived to make the meaning perfectly clear. "I do not see why you should think that, Julia," she said; "of course a person of Miss Cunningham's rank would never do any thing of the kind, but it is wrong to say she could not do it."

"No one said so, of course," exclaimed Miss Cunningham.

"O dear! no," replied Julia; "all that I said was, that conjurers were clever."

Amy looked at Miss Cunningham, and saw that for once in her life she understood; and anxious if possible to preserve peace, she returned again to the subject of vulgarity; saying, she wished she could comprehend it better.

"You will comprehend it very well when you are older and have seen more of the world," replied Emily; "but I think now if you observe what things strike you as vulgar in persons, you will find they are always those which arise from a wish to be thought richer, or cleverer, or higher in rank than they really are, or else from their having the manners and habits of a class who are inferior to themselves. Bad grammar is very natural in a labouring man, and very vulgar in a nobleman; a splendid dress is very proper for a queen, and very vulgar for the wife of a tradesman: all persons who go out of their station, or pretend to be what they are not, must be vulgar, whether they are princes or peasants. You often hear of persons of no education, who have made great fortunes from a very low beginning, trying to vie with those born to rank and riches, and then they are laughed at as vulgar. If they had kept to their own station, they might have had precisely the same manners; but they would have escaped ridicule, because then there would have been no pretence about them."

"But it is in little things that I am puzzled," said Amy. "Are persons vulgar who make pies and puddings, and mend their own clothes?"

"To be sure they are, Amy," said Frank, who had great notions of having every one belonging to him very refined and superior; "I hope you never intend to do such things, or you had better set up a dame school at once."

"But do you think so, too?" asked Amy, looking earnestly at Miss Morton.

"No! indeed, I do not," replied Emily; "I think

the more we know of common useful things, the better, as long as we are not ashamed of them. It is the doing them in private, and pretending to be ignorant of them in public, which constitutes the vulgarity."

"I am always afraid of not knowing what I ought to do when I am with people," said Amy, "and I should be so sorry to do vulgar things."

Miss Morton smiled, as she looked at Amy's sweet face, and listened to her peculiarly ladylike pronunciation, and thought how impossible it would be for her to appear any thing but a lady.

"Oh!" said Miss Cunningham, "it is quite out of the question for people who live always in the country to understand what things are proper and fashionable, and what are not. I should never have known myself if my aunt had not told me; and of course she knows, because she goes out constantly in London."

"Really," said Julia, satirically, "that quite surprises me; but then I am very ignorant, I have never even been in London."

"Do you think I shall ever learn to be fashionable?" asked Amy of Miss Morton.

"I hope not," said Emily, regardless of Miss Cunningham's contemptuous smile.

"Why?" asked Margaret, "do not you wish her to be ladylike?"

"Yes," replied Emily; "but it does not follow that to be ladylike it is necessary to be fashionable. A fashionable manner is a manner put on; a really ladylike manner arises from a really ladylike mind; one is sincere, the other generally is affected, and when persons strive to be fashionable, they often end in becoming vulgar."

"Then what do you think we should try to be?" asked Mary Warner.

"Nothing," replied Emily: "those who possess a cultivated mind, and a gentle, humble disposition, need

not try to be any thing; they may be quite sure of not being vulgar; and as for being elegant and graceful, they will never become so by thinking about it; the very endeavour must make them constrained."

"But I should so like to be elegant," said Margaret.

"So would many others," answered Emily; "and they would like to be beautiful, too, but they cannot make themselves so. Elegance is a gift as much as beauty."

A conscious smile passed over Margaret's countenance; she felt that one gift at least she possessed, and the sight of Miss Cunningham's plain face was more agreeable to her than ever; she was sure it must be such a contrast to her own.

"Then," said Mary Warner, "you would not advise any person to imitate the manners of another?"

"No," replied Emily; "because persons' manners ought to suit with their minds; and as all persons have different minds, so they must, to a certain degree, have different manners. Manners should be the veil through which the mind is seen, not the covering by which it is hidden."

"Come, Frank," exclaimed Henry Dornford, who was tired of having to labour alone; "do leave all the young ladies to discuss their manners by themselves; it can be nothing to you, and I want you dreadfully."

"Coming, coming," said Frank, hastily. "only I must say one thing, that I know I can see some persons' minds in their manners quite plainly. Yours, Dora, for instance; any one might see you are as proud as a queen by the way you march into a room."

"O Frank!" half whispered Amy, as she saw the angry flush on Dora's cheek, "do not say such things as that; you have vexed Dora, I am sure."

"I did not mean any harm," said Frank, "only it is a truth; now I will just ask every one, don't you all think I am right?"

Poor Dora's dignity was shocked beyond expression, at the idea of this public criticism; but she tried to laugh as her only resource. Every one looked and felt awkward; and Frank, who had spoken thoughtlessly from the impulse of the moment, wished his words unsaid. Happily Henry Dornford broke the silence by calling again to him to leave them; and Frank this time had no wish for any more last words. Dora strove to recover her equanimity, but in vain; she fancied every one must be thinking of and judging her, and she knew that what Frank had said was true. Perhaps, if he had expressed himself differently, her annoyance might have been less; for she had always imagined it dignified and suitable to her position to have rather proud manners; it kept people at a distance, and made them recollect who she was, and she fancied that pride and dignity must go together. But to hear her manners discussed in her presence by school-girls and school-boys, was a very different thing; and after a few efforts to appear unconcerned, she left the party to themselves, and retired to her own room. Amy saw by her countenance what was passing in her mind; but she did not like to follow her, for she knew there were times when pity and sympathy would be more distasteful to Dora than any thing. When her cousin was unhappy, Amy had no hesitation in endeavouring to comfort her; but when she had done wrong, it would have seemed interfering improperly to take any notice of it, for Amy never forgot that Dora was her superior in age, and in the knowledge of many things she had acquired by being the eldest of the family, and by having been brought forward far beyond her years.

Dora's absence was not much regretted, and the work went on so quickly and merrily, that the sound of the dinner-bell was pronounced by all to be very unwelcome; but dinner was quickly ended, and Henry Dornford again summoned them to put the finishing

stroke to the whole, and to say if any thing more were needed. The question went round in rotation; and, being a little tired, they felt no inclination to suggest further improvements. But Amy, perceiving that Dora was not there, immediately proposed that her opinion should be asked.

"O nonsense!" exclaimed Margaret. "What will it signify what Dora says? We cannot all set to work again to please her. Why will you always interfere, Amy?"

"I did not mean to interfere indeed, Margaret," replied Amy; "but you know Dora never likes any thing to be decided without her, and she has been the chief manager of this."

"She is the chief manager of every thing, I think," said Miss Cunningham; "at least, she would be if she could."

"But she is the eldest," said Amy.

"She is not so old as I am; and if she were, I do not see why we are all to give up our taste to hers. If she wants to give an opinion, why does she go away?"

"She did not know that it would be all finished so soon, perhaps," answered Amy. "I wish I might go and tell her."

"There is no reason against it that I can see," said Frank; "only she must not expect us to begin working again, merely for her pleasure."

"I daresay," replied Amy, "she will think it does very nicely; but I am sure she would like to be asked, and it would be a pity she should be vexed twice in the day."

Frank's good nature immediately took the hint; and without saying another word, he ran off himself to find Dora, and, if possible, to soothe her feelings by making her the principal person in the business. A few months before, Dora's irritation would have continued a whole day after such a severe trial to her temper, and solitude

would only have increased her annoyance, by giving her more time to reflect upon its cause; but since she had known Amy, and could contrast her gentleness meekness, and constant cheerfulness, with things in her own character so much the reverse, she had for the first time felt her defects, and longed to correct them; and having earnestly and resolutely determined to realize those longings by putting in practice the rules she had laid down to aid her improvement, she was now beginning to feel all the benefit of them; for she had learnt, as the first step, to distrust her own powers, and to ask for a higher strength. Happily Dora was gifted with an energy of mind which prevented her from delaying her duty when once it had been clearly pointed out; and the time spent by herself had been so well employed, that all traces of irritation had vanished even before dinner, very much to Frank's and Margaret's astonishment; and now, with apparently the most perfect good humour, she gave her opinion as to what was required to complete the adornment of the saloon; and then, finding that no one was disposed to agree with her, relinquished her own idea, and declared herself willing to abide by the decision of the majority.

Amy noticed the change, and asked herself whether she could have been equally good-humoured; and Margaret remarked it also, in so loud a whisper to Miss Cunningham, that it was impossible for Dora not to overhear it. The heightened colour told in an instant that she did: but she had conquered her temper once that day, and the second trial was comparatively easy; it required but one moment of recollection, and a slight effort at self-control, and to all appearance she was perfectly unruffled.

The party separated almost immediately afterwards; and Amy went to her mother's room. Mr Harrington was with her, and they were talking, as usual, of India, Colonel Herbert, and the probability

of hearing from him. The same things had been repeated again and again; but this subject was now the only one in which Mrs Herbert could take any real interest, and her brother's affection prevented him from ever feeling it wearisome.

"And do you really think, then," were the words Amy heard as she entered the room, "do you really think that it is possible there may be a letter by the last mail?"

"Only just possible," replied Mr Harrington, "as this place is so retired, and my own letters sometimes go astray; but you must feel that such a hope as that is a mere shadow. I earnestly wish you could make up your mind not to think about it. The anxiety is doing you more harm than you can imagine."

"Dr Bailey will be here this evening, I suppose," said Mrs Herbert with a smile; "and then he will set your mind at ease about me. I have felt so much better since I have had something like a certain hope to build on, that I have very little fear for myself now."

"But the suspense," replied Mr Harrington; "no mind can bear that, and the constant dwelling upon one subject. If you could only divert your thoughts, I am sure it will help you."

"I do try, indeed I do," said Mrs Herbert: "for your sake, and for Amy's, I make the effort continually; but the one idea will remain; and even when I believe I am interested in what I am doing, I find that the slightest unusual sound, or the sudden opening of a door, will make my heart beat violently, and bring on the faintness to which I am subject, so as completely to take away my strength. But I am not going to give way to this, you may be quite sure," she added, seeing that Mr Harrington looked very grave; "and to prove it I intend to make Amy tell me all she has been doing this afternoon."

Mr Harrington went away, and Amy did her utmost to amuse her mother, and found so much to relate, that she had scarcely time to dress before she was summoned to tea. The conjurer was expected to arrive about seven o'clock, and Dora had arranged everything satisfactorily to her own wishes, with Mrs Harrington's consent, for their having a dance when the exhibition was over; and even Miss Cunningham condescended to say, on hearing it, that she expected to have a very pleasant evening.

Amy rather shrank from the idea of dancing before strangers, and wished that the few persons invited for the evening would find some reason for staying at home; but her anticipations of pleasure were still great, and when the party adjourned to the saloon to await the conjurer's arrival, there were few whose eyes sparkled as brightly, or whose laugh was as joyous, as hers.

"Who has ever seen a conjurer?" asked Henry Dornford, as they stood round the fire.

Mary Warner was the only one who had been so fortunate, and the exhibition she had witnessed was but an indifferent one.

"Well, then!" exclaimed Henry, proud of his superior knowledge, "I advise you all to take care of yourselves, or you will lose your senses."

"Why should we do that?" said Julia. "Is the conjurer going to steal them? I shall congratulate him on the treasure he will get from some of us at least," and she looked round to see if Miss Cunningham were near; but she had not yet made her appearance, and Julia's satire was lost.

"I really am afraid for the little ones," continued Henry. "Conjurers do such wonderful things, and they generally dress themselves up in an outlandish way; and the one I saw talked a sort of double Dutch, just to make us think that he came from Timbuctoo."

"If that be a qualification for a conjurer," said Julia, "we had better get poor Mr Cunningham to exhibit. I defy any one to know what part of the world he comes from."

"So he would make a capital conjurer," said Henry Dornford; "and he would not want a mask either; for he can twist his face into a hundred and twenty different shapes in a minute. Just look, I am sure I can do it exactly like him."

"Ah! but can you talk too?" said Julia: "it is nothing without the stammering and stuttering."

"But he does not stammer," observed Mary Warner.

"Never mind," said Henry. "Listen—yet wait—I will go out of the room, and come in again in his blind way, with a glass to my eye, and then speak, and you shall tell me if you would have known us apart."

Julia laughed heartily at the idea, and Henry was just going when he was stopped by Amy.

"I wish," she said timidly, "you would not do it, because"—and here she paused.

"Because what?" asked Henry, in great astonishment.

"Because," said Amy, more firmly, "it is not quite right, is it, to laugh at people and mimic them?"

"Not right to laugh at people!" exclaimed Henry; "what a girl's notion that is!—why, half the fun in the world would be gone if we were not allowed to laugh at any one."

"I don't think that makes it right," said Amy.

"O nonsense, nonsense!" was the reply. "I will soon teach you to think differently from that; now just look at me, and see if it is not capital sport."

Henry ran to the door, and then re-entered, with a manner and voice so exactly like Mr Cunningham's, that all burst into a loud laugh;—all, except Amy, who tried very hard to prevent even a smile; and

when she found this was impossible, began blaming herself, and anxiously repeating her request that Henry would not do it.

"It is quite Mr Cunningham's misfortune," she said; "and he is so good and so kind—he has been so very kind to me."

The peculiar sound which always preceded Mr Cunningham's sentences was heard when Amy had spoken, and some one said, "Thank you;" but it was not Henry Dornford, for he looked completely frightened, and fixed his eyes on the door. No one ventured to utter another word, and in the silence retreating footsteps were heard along the passage.

"Do you think he heard all we were saying?" asked Henry.

"Don't say we," replied Hester Stanley; "you know no one had anything to do with it but yourself. Why did you not take care to shut the door?"

"I daresay he only caught the last words," said Julia; "and if so, there is no harm done; besides, listeners never hear any good of themselves. It is his own fault; people who don't know how to talk should stay at home."

"I think it served us right," said Mary Warner. "I felt it was wrong all the time, only it amused me so."

"Well! there is no use in troubling ourselves about it," said Julia; "he is neither father, brother, nor cousin to any of us, and most probably we shall never see him again after to-morrow; so do let the matter rest."

Amy thought that the never seeing him again could not make any difference in the action; but it was not her place to speak. She only felt glad that Mr Cunningham would not consider her unfeeling and forgetful of his kindness, and wondered at Julia's appearing so indifferent to the thought of having given

pain, for she continued laughing and talking as before, and trying to make the others do the same. Her efforts, however, were not quite successful; the circumstance had cast a blank over their enjoyment, and many anxious eyes were turned to the door to see if Mr Cunningham were likely to appear again, and all felt relieved when the conjurer was announced, and the rest of the company came into the room. Mr Cunningham was with them, but their thoughts were now diverted from him, though they all remarked that he took especial notice of Amy, and placed her by his side in the best position for seeing everything.

Amy was grateful for his kindness, but wished it had been differently shown. At first she felt uneasy in her rather elevated situation, and she dreaded very much lest he should begin talking, and especially lest he should refer to what had passed; but this evening he was peculiarly silent, and Amy soon forgot every thing but the delight of seeing flowers grow out of egg-shells, chickens hatched in a gentleman's hat, rings and brooches found in the possession of every one but their right owners, and all the other wonders which made the conjurer appear to possess some unearthly power. She hardly wished for an explanation of them, and felt quite vexed when she heard Henry Dornford whisper to Frank that some of the tricks were quite nonsense—things he could do himself; while Mr Cunningham rose in her favour when he told her that great part of the exhibition was beyond his comprehension, and that what Henry had said was merely a school-boy's boast. It seemed now less difficult to believe the marvellous stories of fairies and genii which she had so often read, and she was considering in her own mind whether Aladdin's lamp might not actually be in existence at that moment, when the green curtain fell, and they were again left to the realities of every-day life. There was an

exclamation of regret from all the party, with the exception of Miss Cunningham, who said she was tired of sitting in a dark room. Even little Rose, though she rubbed her eyes, and was almost inclined to cry from mere weariness, begged that the funny man might come back again, or that at least she might have one of the eggs with the pretty flowers in it; and Amy secretly wished the same thing, though she was ashamed to own it when she found every body laughing at Rose, and promising her sugar plums and sweetmeats to pacify her.

Miss Cunningham was the first to follow Mrs Harrington to the drawing-room, and to propose that they should begin dancing immediately; a proceeding which excited considerable surprise in Amy's mind, and induced Mr Cunningham to take his sister aside, and beg her to remember that she was not in her own house, and therefore it could not be her place to make suggestions. Dancing did, however, commence almost immediately. Emily Morton was placed at the piano, and no one but Amy appeared to consider that the trouble given required either thanks or apology. It was her business and her duty; and whether agreeable or not, it was a subject of trifling moment. Amy indeed had more leisure to think about it than the rest; for the number of dancers being unequal, she was the only one left out. Dora and Margaret had been first thought of by every one, and Mrs Harrington had taken care of the visitors; but Amy had no claim; she was looked upon as sufficiently at home to be left to herself, and not of consequence enough to be noticed; and the quadrille was formed, and the music had begun, before any one recollected her. Not to dance was rather a relief, but not to be asked was a neglect to which poor Amy was peculiarly alive. The occupations of the last few days had been too varied and interesting to leave much time for her old feelings to

return, and she had fancied that they would never trouble her again; but now as she stood by Miss Morton's side, the only one of the young party who was disengaged, they pressed upon her mind most painfully. Had her mother been in the room, she would have felt it much less; but Mrs Herbert seldom came down when so many persons were present, and Amy in consequence was completely alone. It was the gayest scene she had ever witnessed, and the bright lights and the joyous music alone, would at another time have given her thorough enjoyment; but now they were only a source of discontent, for they were looked upon as intended for others and not for her. She watched Dora, and thought how delightful it would be to be like her, the object of general attention, and she listened to the whispered admiration of Margaret's beauty, till she fancied for the moment that to be beautiful must constitute happiness. But Amy's delusion did not last long; she turned from her cousins to Emily Morton, and the sight of her in some measure recalled better feelings. With beauty, elegance, and goodness, she was as unnoticed as herself. She had no mother, no friends; her daily life was one of wearying mortification and self-denial; and yet Emily Morton had never been heard to utter a single murmur. She had never been known to compare her lot with others, or to wonder why she was deprived of the comforts enjoyed by them; and her heart was a perpetual well-spring of quiet gratitude, which made the heaviest trials of her life sources of improvement to herself, and of blessing to those around her. Even at that moment, her sweet smile and cheerful voice, as she begged to be told whether she was playing to please them, were a lesson which Amy could not but profit by, for she knew that in Emily's place she should have felt very differently; and she sighed, as the thought crossed her mind how difficult it would be to

imitate her. She did, however, make the effort at once, and when Dora approached, tried to speak gaily and to overcome her vexation; but a second and a third quadrille were formed, and still she was not asked to dance, and then the tears rushed to her eyes, and she longed to steal away unobserved, and go to her mamma for the remainder of the evening. Yet she was too shy to venture across the room by herself, and nothing was to be done but to sit quietly in the corner, watching the others, and trying not to be envious of them. Mr Cunningham would willingly have done his utmost to amuse her; but he was obliged to dance himself to make up the set, and it was not till the termination of the third quadrille that he came to her and began talking. Amy was getting accustomed to his voice, and found his conversation such a relief to her loneliness, that it restored her to a feeling of something like pleasure: she was certain also, from his manner, that he had overheard what had passed in the saloon; for, although his behaviour to Henry Dornford, and the rest of the party, was exactly the same as usual, yet he was evidently more anxious to please her than he had ever been before, and she felt his kindness peculiarly after the disappointment she had suffered. She could not, however, quite recover her accustomed cheerfulness even when at length she did join the quadrille; and the enjoyment of the evening was almost lost, especially when she thought how she had looked forward to it, and compared her brilliant expectations with the unlooked-for reality.

CHAPTER XXII.

But there was a greater trial awaiting poor Amy's feelings, on that evening, than any she could suffer from neglect. Tired with dancing, she had seated herself in the most retired part of the room, and was half hidden by the window curtain, when Mrs Danvers and another lady approached; and, without observing who was near, began to remark aloud upon what was going on. At first Amy was amused; she supposed, from their speaking so openly, that they had no wish for privacy, and all they said was of so trifling a nature, and mentioned so good naturedly, that no pain could have been excited, even if it had been repeated publicly.

The conversation continued for some time; and Amy, feeling weary of her position, was wishing to move, when there was a general press towards the door near which she was standing, and which led into the library, where refreshments had been prepared; and as she stepped aside to make room for others to pass on, it became necessary for her to remain where she was till they were all gone. Mrs Danvers and her friend were nearly in the same situation, and still continued talking, as if perfectly careless whether they were overheard or not.

"Did you see that little girl," said Mrs Danvers, "who danced the last quadrille with Frank Harrington?"

"Yes," was the reply, "I had not noticed her before all the evening: who is she?"

"A niece, I believe, of Mr Harrington's," said Mrs

Danvers; "there is nothing very remarkable about her, only she interests me from circumstances."

"What circumstances?" inquired her friend.

"Her father is in India," answered Mrs Danvers, "and they have had no letters for a long time; and though there has been some rumour of him lately, and he may be returning home, it is very uncertain; and Mrs Herbert is in such a dreadful state of anxiety in consequence, that she is extremely ill; and if any thing should happen to her, of course the poor child will live here."

"She will have a comfortable home, at all events," observed her companion.

Mrs Danvers looked grave, and replied, "It will be a very different thing from what it is now. Mrs Harrington is so proud, and her eldest girl so exactly like her, that it will be a state of miserable dependence."

"But is there no hope for Mrs Herbert?"

"None at all, as far as I can understand? she has been getting worse and worse for the last six months, and, in fact, I believe myself that she is dying."

Amy heard the last words, and it seemed as if all power of motion or utterance had been taken from her. For months she had felt at times a vague fear that her mother might be worse than she would acknowledge; but the interest of passing events had quickly dispelled her apprehension, and she had gone on till that hour without allowing herself to imagine that it could be actually possible; and now, in one moment, the dreadful truth had flashed upon her mind—truth at least it seemed to her, for it had been asserted so confidently, and by persons so much her superiors, that she could not bring herself to doubt it. Her mother's pale face, her uncle's anxious looks, his wish that a physician should be consulted, all returned to her remembrance, and all confirmed Mrs Danvers' words. Her senses nearly forsook her, her head grew giddy, the lights,

the people, the music, seemed to have passed away, and the only thing of which she was sensible was a burthen of intolerable misery. Even tears did not come to her relief; for she was stunned by the suddenness of the shock, and silent and motionless she remained unnoticed and unthought of till the company had passed into the library; and then, with a sudden impulse to escape from the brilliant room and the sound of gaiety, she ran up stairs towards her mother's chamber. Still, however, she had sufficient self-possession to feel that she might be wrong to venture there suddenly; and passing the room she continued her way along the gallery, with but one wish—that of finding some place where she might be undiscovered. The sound of footsteps only quickened her movements, and almost unconscious of her actions, she opened the first door that presented itself, and found herself alone in the chapel. The cold light of the moon was shining full into the building, touching with its clear rays the deep moulding of the arches and the rich tracery of the windows, and bringing out into an unnatural distinctness the sculptured figure of the old Baron of Emmerton, whose still features seemed to retain, even in death, the holy humble spirit which it was said had animated them in life. At another time Amy might have felt frightened, but the one overpowering idea in her mind prevented the entrance of every other, and there was a quietness and holiness in the place, which in some degree restored her to herself, for it brought vividly before her the remembrance of Him to whom it had been dedicated, and who at that moment she knew was watching over her. She had, however, but a few moments for reflection when the door opened, and some one entered the private gallery. Amy tried to hide herself, but Miss Morton's voice in an instant gave her ease and comfort; and, unable to speak, she threw herself upon her neck, and burst into tears.

"Amy! my dear, dear Amy!" exclaimed Miss Morton, "what can be the meaning of this? why are you here?"

Amy only replied by repeating the word "mamma," in a tone of such deep misery, that Miss Morton's heart for the moment misgave her.

"What of your mamma?" she inquired, "is she ill?"

The question only seemed to increase Amy's distress, and Emily became alarmed. "Will you not try to be calm for my sake?" she said; "you cannot tell how anxious you are making me."

"Is it true?" exclaimed Amy, almost gasping for breath, "why did you not tell me before?"

"What should I have told you?" said Emily, feeling completely bewildered: "I have known nothing."

"But mamma," continued Amy, "she is so very ill—they say she is, and every one knows it but me;" and again her sobs became almost hysterical.

"This is some very great mistake, dearest," said Miss Morton; "you will, I am sure, try to calm yourself, and listen to me. Mrs Herbert is not at all worse than usual this evening."

"Ah! but Mrs Danvers said it," replied Amy.

"Said what?" asked Emily.

"She said," answered Amy, forcing herself to an unnatural composure, "that papa, perhaps, would not come home, and that mamma was so very ill; and she talked of my living here, and that I should be miserable: but I should die—oh! I know I should die,"—she added with a vehemence which startled Miss Morton. "God would not let me live without them; do you think he would?"

The tone in which this was said was almost too much for Emily's firmness; for the trial which Amy dreaded, she had herself endured, and she well remembered its bitterness. "My own dear Amy,"

she said, "you must listen to me now, as you have often done before: you know that I shall speak nothing but the truth to you. Your mamma is ill from anxiety, but there is no reason to apprehend that anything is seriously the matter with her. Dr Bailey has been here this evening."

"Has he?" exclaimed Amy; "oh! why did you not tell me?"

"Because you were engaged at the time," replied Emily, "and I had no idea you would be so anxious. He says that there is nothing really amiss yet, that all she requires is rest for the spirits; and he has quite relieved Mr Harrington's mind."

"Are you sure—are you quite sure?" asked Amy, heaving a deep sigh, as if to free herself from the overwhelming weight which had oppressed her.

"Yes, indeed, I am sure," replied Emily; "of course it is not for us to speak positively as to what is to happen—it may be the will of God to take her, or to take any one, at any moment; but according to our human judgment there is nothing to fear."

"But you cannot be quite certain," said Amy, whilst the cloud which had partly passed away, seemed about to return; "and Mrs Danvers spoke as if she were."

"Mrs Danvers can know nothing of the matter," answered Emily; "she has seen very little of your mamma since she has been here; and you must think of what Dr Bailey says, and try to be happy for the present."

But Amy could not be happy, she could not so easily overcome the shock she had received; and again anxiously asked Emily whether Dr Bailey really said that her mamma would get well.

"He thinks and hopes she will," replied Emily; "but no one can be certain."

"But if she should not," said Amy, as she leant

her head on Miss Morton's shoulder, and her tears flowed afresh, ——

"If she should not," replied Emily, "would you not try to think of her happiness, even if it were your sorrow?"

Amy tried to recover herself, but the effort was almost beyond her. "I could not live without her," she said, in a broken voice.

"Yes," replied Emily, "you can—we all can learn to submit to whatever is the will of God; and we can learn to think suffering a blessing, and to thank Him for it even more than for joy; but you will not understand this now."

"To live here," said Amy, following the course of her own thoughts, ——

"You must not think of it," replied Emily; "God may in mercy grant you many years of happiness in your own home; but there is no place where he is, which may not be your home. Will you endeavour to think of this, dearest? I know it is true," she added, in a low voice, "for I have no home."

"Oh! if I could be like you," exclaimed Amy, earnestly, recalled for the moment from the thought of her own sorrow.

"Do not wish that," said Emily; "but there is One whom we must all learn to be like, and His life was but one continued scene of suffering. We can never have to bear what he bore."

"I am very wicked," said Amy, "but I will try to think as you do, only it is so hard."

"You need not make yourself unhappy now," replied Emily, "by dwelling on a trial which may be far off. I cannot see any great cause for anxiety, only it is well at times to think of sorrow, even in the midst of happiness, that we may be the better prepared to meet it."

"I thought," said Amy, "that I should never be unhappy till I grew old."

"And so I thought once," replied Emily. "But Amy, before we were either of us conscious of existence, we were both dedicated to the Saviour who died for us, and the sign of his suffering was marked upon our foreheads: it would be worse than weakness to shrink from following his footsteps, because he calls us to it early."

"And must I be miserable?" said Amy.

"No, never," answered Emily, eagerly; "misery is for those who cannot feel that they have a Father in heaven, and therefore it is that when we are too happy, and begin to forget him, he sends us sorrow to recall us to himself."

"Mamma told me something like that once," said Amy, with a heavy sigh: "but I did not think sorrow would come so soon."

"You must not fancy it is come, dearest," replied Emily; "and you must not think, whatever happens, that you will be miserable. In this place, least of all, because every thing in a church reminds us that we have God to watch over us, and our Saviour to love us, and holy angels to guard us."

Amy raised her head, and for a few moments gazed in silence upon the still solemn beauty of the chapel. "It is better to be here," she said at last, "than in the drawing-room with the lights and the music."

"You can feel so now," replied Emily, "because you are unhappy, and when you have had more trials you will feel so always. When persons have suffered much, and borne their afflictions with patience and thankfulness, they become in a degree calm and composed, as that marble figure beneath us; for their eyes are closed to the sights of the world, and their hearts are raised continually to heaven. Only think how good the saints and martyrs were, of whom you have often read; it was trial and suffering which made them so."

"Oh! yes," replied Amy, "but who can be like them?"

"We can," answered Emily, "if we really wish and try to be. When we were baptized, you know God gave us his Holy Spirit to enable us to obey him; and you know also that he will give it to us, more and more every day, if we only pray to him. The greatest saint that ever lived could not have had a higher strength than ours; and therefore, if they bore their afflictions without murmuring, we can do the same."

Amy was silent, her eyes were fixed upon the marble monument, and she seemed lost in thought. "May I go to mamma?" she said at length, in a calmer tone.

"I think," answered Emily, "that Mrs Herbert is asleep on the sofa in her bedroom, at least Morris told me so just before I came up stairs, and perhaps you may disturb her."

"I must, indeed I must see her!" exclaimed Amy; "I do not want to speak, only to look at her; and I will try to bear every thing," she added earnestly, though the tears again filled her eyes as she spoke.

"I wish," said Emily, "you could have listened to Dr Bailey's opinion yourself; I only heard it accidentally as I met him in the hall: he seemed to think that if your papa came home soon, Mrs Herbert would get well almost immediately."

"I do not think he will come now," said Amy: "it seems all changed, and my uncle wishes us not to think about it."

Emily hardly knew what reply to make; she had so many fears upon the subject herself, that she dared not give Amy the hope which she desired, and could only again beg her to try and trust all things to the will of God, and to feel that he whose child she was, would be her comfort in every affliction.

"Will they miss me?" said Amy, as they left the gallery; "do you think my aunt will ask where I am

gone?" The question showed that her mind had returned to something like its natural state, and Emily felt considerably relieved.

"I will take care to make your excuse," she said, "if any observation is made; but, dearest, you must promise me not to sit by yourself, and dwell upon all the possible evils that may happen. I do not think you will, for your mamma's sake; it will make her worse to see you unhappy."

"I would try for you," said Amy, "I would do any thing—yes, any thing in all the world for you."

"Any thing but believe that your mamma will get well," said Emily, "and yet that is what I most wish you to do now."

Amy's only answer was an entreaty that she then would come to her again as soon as she could, and sadly and noiselessly she stole into her mother's room.

Mrs Herbert's sleep was calm as the sleep of a weary child, her breathing was regular and gentle, and her face had lost the painful expression of anxiety which was seldom absent from it at other times. There was a slight tinge of colour upon her pale cheek, and almost a smile upon her lips, and it appeared as if the rest of the mind, which was denied to her waking life, had been mercifully granted to her in her dreams. But Amy, as she stood by her side, did not notice this; she saw only the pale worn features, and the thin delicate hand which was resting on the book her mother had been reading, and every moment seemed to force upon her more and more the truth of Mrs Danvers' words. Yet her self-command did not again leave her; and seating herself on a low stool by the sofa, she continued to watch, and listen to every breath, with an intense anxiety which made her insensible to all but the present moment. Still Mrs Herbert slept, and still Amy watched, and by degrees the first overpowering feeling diminished, and her thoughts returned to the

past—to her peaceful home, the cottage which she had once almost despised, with its sloping lawn and its beautiful flowers, and the arbour where her happiest hours had been spent; to the quietness of her morning lessons, and the enjoyment of her afternoon rambles; and, above all, to the unwearying care which had guarded her from every evil, and ministered to her hourly gratification; and as she remembered these things, and then gazed upon her mother's face, it seemed as if every feeling of affection which she had hitherto experienced, had been but cold and ungrateful, as if now, for the first time, she had known what it was really to love her. Of Emmerton, too, she thought, and of her aunt, and Dora, and Margaret, and the possibility that their home might be hers for the future; and while pondering upon the idea, the very comfort of the room in which she was sitting, with its rich crimson curtains and thick carpet, and luxurious chairs, and the soft mellow light of the lamp burning on the table—all became oppressive. They had made her envious and discontented when she was happy, and now they could give her no comfort when she was sorrowful. What would all the riches of the world be to her without her mother? On the possibility of her father's return she could at first dwell but little; for it was difficult to believe it very near, and if it were delayed, it might be too late to be of use, and a meeting under such circumstances would be almost worse than a continued separation. But Amy's spirit was too buoyant in its nature to remain long depressed by such forebodings; there was a brighter side to the picture, and Miss Morton had entreated her to think of it. Colonel Herbert might be on his voyage home, he might even be in England at that very time, and then every one said her mamma would recover. For one moment she believed that it might be so, and her heart bounded with delight, though immediately after-

wards it sunk again into doubt and suspense; and at length worn out with anxiety, she laid her head against her mother's pillow, and slept also. The distant sound of the music, and the hum of voices below, mingled strangely with her sad thoughts, and her rest was far different from her mother's. Visions of India such as it had often been described to her, of her father in health and happiness, and her mamma on her sick bed, and of the Cottage, and Emmerton, and her cousins, were blended together in her dreams, now bringing before her scenes of sorrow and trial, and then changing them suddenly into happiness. Sorrow indeed prevailed; yet the hope which had cheered her before she slept was associated with it, and even when her wandering fancy pictured most vividly some painful trial, her father's image was at hand to comfort and support her. Half an hour passed away, and Amy's slumber still continued restless but unbroken, whilst in her dream she was walking with her father on the terrace at Emmerton, describing to him her mother's illness, and begging him to go back with her to the Cottage, when a strange unusual sound fell upon her ear; and as she turned to inquire from him the cause, she awoke. The sound was apparently so real, that even when her recollection was completely recovered, Amy could not entirely believe it was only a dream, and she listened eagerly to discover what was passing below. The music had ceased, but there did not seem to be any preparations for departure, or the carriages would have been heard as they drove up to the house; and yet there were distant sounds of bustle, doors were opened and shut hastily, and voices were earnest in conversation, while servants were moving quickly along the gallery. Amy thought, and wondered, and without understanding her own ideas, grew excited and anxious. She longed for her mother to wake, that she might listen also; and at length, unable to remain quietly in

her room, she walked softly into the ante-room. It looked out upon the front entrance, and the bright moonlight made everything appear almost as clear as day. Still unable to comprehend what was going on, she went to the window; there was a carriage at the door, and she wondered that she had not heard it approach, but still no one was departing, and bags and luggage were being removed from it. Amy looked on for a few moments, and then a thought of unspeakable happiness passed across her mind, a thought so overpowering that it was gone in the next instant. She felt that it was only fancy; but it made her run to the door, and again listen with breathless earnestness. Footsteps were heard upon the stairs; she knew them well—they were her uncle's, and her spirit sickened with disappointment; they came nearer—and then she felt sure some one else was with him. It might be Dr Bailey returned again, or Mr Dornford, or any one, yet Amy's heart beat till she could scarcely stand. More slowly (so it appeared to her) than he had ever moved before, Mr Harrington passed along the gallery, and she was just going to meet him when he entered the room alone. Amy turned deadly pale, and did not speak; but when she looked in her uncle's face, her vanished hope revived. He asked, indeed, only how her mother was; but his voice was quick and unnatural; there was a bright restless glance in his eye, and a strange smile upon his lips.

"Mamma is asleep," said Amy; "she has been asleep very long, and I slept a little; but such a strange sound wakened me."

"Nonsense, child," said Mr Harrington; "are you sure it was not in your dreams? What did you hear?"

"I don't know," replied Amy; "only it was so strange, and there is no music now, and there is a carriage at the door."

"Why, you foolish child," said Mr Harrington, "you are dreaming still. It is time for every one to go."

"Is there really nothing?" inquired Amy; and her very existence seemed to depend upon the answer she received.

"What should there be?" said Mr Harrington. "Do you think your mamma could see Dr Bailey again?"

"Again!" repeated Amy: "oh! then, she must be very ill."

"No, no," exclaimed Mr Harrington, "not ill; only he might as well see her."

"But is he here?" asked Amy.

Mr Harrington did not answer; but he left the room, and immediately returned, followed by another gentleman. Amy looked at him as he entered, and for the first moment believed that he was a perfect stranger; but as he stood quietly in the door-way, with the light of the lamp falling full on his face, she became conscious that every feature was familiar to her. Again she looked, and then she doubted: she seemed to know well the high forehead, the dark eye, and the grave mouth; but the sallow complexion, the deep wrinkles, and the look of age, completely bewildered her.

"Amy," said Mr Harrington, "why do you not speak?"

Amy's voice was almost choked as she endeavoured to reply. "O uncle!" she exclaimed—"if I could but tell ——," and she burst into tears.

"This must not be," said the deep rich voice of the stranger. "Harrington, it is wrong to trifle with her. Amy, my own precious child!"—and the next moment Amy was clasped in her father's arms.

CHAPTER XXIII.

In her after life Amy enjoyed many and great blessings; but she could never recur to any which equalled the pure intense pleasure of that moment. Colonel Herbert's return seemed the restoration of both her parents; and even before she had again looked in her father's face, and wondered at the strangeness of his sudden arrival, she had thought of the unspeakable relief her mother would experience, and involuntarily rushed to the door of her chamber. She was stopped, however, by Mr Harrington.

"We must be careful," he said; "your mamma is too weak to bear such a surprise. I will break it to her gently."

"Mamma is moving," said Amy; "she will hear us. May I not go?"

Mrs Herbert had caught the sound of voices, and asked if Amy were there.

"There is nothing to be done, then," said Mr Harrington, in answer to Amy's imploring look; "but remember you must be cautious."

Colonel Herbert came forward and stationed himself near the door. "I cannot bear this long," he whispered. "Amy, my darling child, I must go to her soon," and Amy, unable to restrain her own eagerness, answered her mother's summons.

"Who is in the ante-room?" said Mrs Herbert. "You were speaking to some one."

"My uncle was there," answered Amy; "he did not know at first that you were asleep."

"Is it late?" asked Mrs Herbert. "You look so flushed, my love; have you been dancing much?"

"No, not much, mamma; there were so many; and I sat still a great while, and then I came up to you."

"I must have slept very long," said Mrs Herbert; "and I would willingly sleep for ever, if my dreams could be as happy; but I will not murmur; it is an infinite blessing to have an hour's rest to the mind, even if it be unreal."

"It may be real soon, mamma," said Amy, and her voice trembled as she spoke.

Mrs Herbert looked at her anxiously. "You are worn out with excitement and fatigue, my dear; that flush on your cheek is very unnatural."

"I don't feel tired at all, mamma," replied Amy; "but my face is rather burning, I think."

"There is something the matter, I am sure," said her mother; "you never looked so before. Are you sure you have not been vexed at any thing?"

"Vexed! oh! no, mamma, any thing but that."

"You must go to bed soon," said Mrs Herbert, "or you will certainly be ill to-morrow."

"I had rather not go to bed," replied Amy; "I could not sleep if I did."

"Not sleep!" repeated Mrs Herbert; "then you must be ill, my dear child, or," she added, after again gazing upon Amy intently, "there must be something very unusual to prevent it."

Amy did not reply, her lip quivered, and her self-command almost forsook her.

"There is something," said Mrs Herbert, starting up, "I am sure there is. Oh! tell me quickly, is it sorrow?"

"No, no, mamma," exclaimed Amy, as she knelt at her mother's side, and hid her face in her lap; "it is not sorrow,—it is great, great joy; but my uncle says you will not be able to bear it."

"Is he come?" asked Mrs Herbert, in a low half audible voice.

There was no time to answer. Colonel Herbert had heard the question, and entered the room. For an instant, Mrs Herbert fixed her eyes wildly upon him, doubting the reality of his appearance, and then, as the truth forced itself upon her mind, she tried to rise from the sofa, and, unequal to the effort, fell back and fainted. With returning consciousness came an indistinct sense of great happiness, but it was some time before she could entirely realise what had happened. She asked no questions—she did not even seem surprised at her husband's unexpected arrival; but sat with his hand in her own looking at him earnestly, as if still fearful that it was but a vision which she saw, and that it would quickly vanish away.

Colonel Herbert's feelings were not quite of so unmixed a nature. Mr Harrington had prepared him in some degree for the change which illness and anxiety had made in his wife's appearance; but he had not pictured it to himself as great as it really was. He had imagined that he should yet see the fair clear complexion, and the bright glow of health which he had so much delighted in when they parted; and now, when his eye rested upon her wasted features, the sad foreboding crossed his mind, that they had met only to endure a more terrible separation. It was not a time, however, for the indulgence of sorrowful thoughts. Mrs Herbert gradually recovered from the stunning effect of an overpowering joy, and was able to inquire into the cause of his strange silence, and his sudden return.

The story, when told, was very simple. Colonel Herbert had gone on an expedition into a distant province, as he had stated in the last letter that had been received from him. The servant who had accompanied him, he had trusted entirely, and had confided

to him several packets intended to be forwarded to England. After the lapse of a considerable time, complaints of his silence reached him from several quarters; and he then first discovered the man's negligence, and wrote again to his wife, hoping that his letter had been secured from all risks, though the unsettled condition of the country through which he was travelling rendered it very doubtful. Before an answer could be received, he was seized with a dangerous illness, and left entirely to the care of the uncivilized natives, in a state of pain and weakness which prevented him from making any exertions for himself; and, on his recovery, hearing of the breaking out of the war, as Mrs Herbert had expected, he hastened to join his regiment; but the insurrection, for it was scarcely more, having been quelled before his arrival, he made arrangements for an immediate return to England, feeling much distressed when he discovered, from Mrs Herbert's letters, the dreadful anxiety she had undergone, and the alteration it had effected in her general health.

"You would have heard from me before I reached Emmerton," concluded Colonel Herbert, "if this place were not so much out of the regular posting line; but I knew I should be with you before a letter could be forwarded."

"You went first to the Cottage, of course," said Mrs Herbert: "it must have worn a desolate face, with none to greet you."

"I inquired for you first in the village," he replied, "and learnt there, that you were spending your Christmas at the Hall; but they gave me a sad account of you, my love, and I hardly know that it is worse than the reality."

"Worse!" repeated Mrs Herbert, with a smile which made Amy's heart bound in ecstacy; "it would seem worse than the reality now, to say even that my

finger ached. Years of health seem to have been granted me in the last hour."

"So you say to-night," replied her husband; "but you must look very different before I shall be quite happy."

"We must not doubt," said Mrs Herbert, gravely, "though I am the last person to find fault with another on that account: I have had dreadful forebodings lately; and Amy, I suspect, can tell you of some also, for my fears were beginning to infect her."

Colonel Herbert drew his child fondly towards him. "She shall tell me everything to-morrow," he said: "to-night she is over tired."

Amy wished to speak; but her first delight had been succeeded by something of shyness and restraint; for her father was in many respects so different from what she had anticipated, that a feeling of awe was partly mingled with the intense interest excited by every word he uttered. Amy had seen but few gentlemen in her lifetime, and Colonel Herbert was unlike them all. She had been accustomed to his picture, until the alterations occasioned by years and a foreign climate were quite forgotten; and the many tales she had heard of his kindness and benevolence had made her unprepared for the firmness and decision evinced in all he said. Even the tone of his voice so little resembled any to which she had been in the habit of listening, that it prevented her from being at ease with him, although this very difference served to increase her pleasure; for to be loved and caressed by one whose every word showed that he had been used only to command and be obeyed, was a happiness she had before been incapable of imagining. To sit by his side, and look at and hearken to him, was all that she now desired; and whatever fatigue her countenance might express, she was herself too much absorbed to think about it; and it was not till some time had

passed, and she found herself alone, after having received her father's blessing (it seemed to her for the first time), that she began to feel the effects of the excitement undergone in the space of a few hours. Wearied and exhausted, she seated herself by the fire, and, unwilling to wait for the assistance of her mother's maid, was endeavouring to summon resolution to exert herself, when a gentle tap was heard at the door, and immediately afterwards Dora entered.

"I could not go to bed, Amy," she said, "without coming to you for one minute. I wish I could tell you, but you know I can't say things, only I am sure no one in the house can be as glad as I am, except yourselves."

"Dear Dora," exclaimed Amy, "I thought of you when I began to think of anything; and there is so much I should like to say to you; but I must wait till to-morrow, for I am so tired with being happy."

"That was another reason for my coming," replied Dora: "I knew you would want some one to help you, and that my aunt's maid would be engaged with her, and perhaps you would not like to ring for Morris; so I thought perhaps you would let me be with you instead."

"Oh, no," replied Amy: "it was very kind in you to remember me, but you cannot be any better than I am; you have been dancing all the evening."

"But I have set my heart upon it: you would not refuse if you could tell the pleasure it would be: I don't mean to talk at all, but just to do everything for you. Perhaps, though, you would rather I came again presently."

Amy hesitated, but Dora insisted on having her own way; and only left her on condition of being allowed to return in a quarter of an hour. When her cousin was gone, Amy tried to collect her thoughts, and oblige herself to attend to her evening prayers;

but at first it seemed impossible. She longed to be grateful, but fatigue overpowered every feeling; and when, closing her eyes, and hiding her face in her hands, she endeavoured to shut out every thing that might divert her attention, the vivid remembrance of all that had passed flashed upon her mind, and effectually distracted her thoughts. Again and again she repeated the form of words, but it was merely a form; she could attach no meaning to it; and once she was tempted to yield entirely, and content herself with the notion that it was better not to pray at all, than to do so when it appeared only a mockery. The next instant, however, she was shocked at her own idea, and, after asking for forgiveness and assistance, at length, in some measure, succeeded in fixing her attention. The effort was great, and Amy's conscience reproached her, when she had ended, for the manner in which this most solemn of all duties had been performed; but her endeavours had been sincere; and she knew well that even her imperfect prayers would be accepted, when they were offered in the name of her Saviour. She was now also better able to feel grateful to God for his great mercies; for the name of her father had never sounded so precious as when she had asked for God's blessing upon him, and had been able to bring his countenance before her, such as she had that evening seen it. Dora's knock was heard at the door before Amy had time to read her accustomed psalm; and, on her entrance, she was looking so tired, that Amy was vexed at having allowed her to return. She declared, however, that it was only her cousin's fancy, and immediately began assisting her with as much energy as if she had borne no previous exertion. Amy was not very much inclined for conversation; but she was anxious to learn a few particulars of her father's arrival, and especially, whether the sound in her dream had been

real or imaginary. "It was so startling," she said, "I should like to be quite certain that it was real."

"It must have been just when your papa came to the door," replied Dora. "We heard the carriage drive up, and thought it was one that had been just ordered, so no one took any notice. I remember I was talking to Mary Warner, and trying to pacify her, for she has offended Miss Cunningham; and suddenly there was a great exclamation; and when I turned round, my uncle was standing in the door-way, and papa was looking so happy. I knew in an instant who it must be. There was something said about my aunt, and that she would hear; and then every one inquired for you, and you could not be found, and Emily Morton said you were with her."

"Then you did not miss me," observed Amy, rather in a tone of disappointment.

"I did," replied Dora; "but Emily told me you were unhappy about my aunt."

"Yes," said Amy, shrinking from the remembrance of what she had suffered—"I hope I shall never feel again as I did then."

"Do not think about it now," said Dora, kindly: "let me draw the curtains, and make you quite comfortable, and then you shall go to sleep."

"Would you do me one more favour?" asked Amy. "Mamma always likes me to read something in the Bible at night, only a short psalm, or a few verses that she has chosen for me; but my eyes are so dizzy now, I can hardly see."

"And you would like me to read to you?" continued Dora, taking the Bible from the table.

"Just tell me about Miss Cunningham before you begin," said Amy; "but no," she added, stopping herself, "I will hear it to-morrow. It will be better than thinking about it just now."

"Oh! it is nothing at all," replied Dora. "Lucy would play as usual, and broke down, and when we were talking afterwards, Mary asked her if she had not some notion of having lessons of Emily Morton, and said what an advantage it would be, and this put her into a great rage, because she declared it was laughing and sneering at her—not that it was at all, for Mary Warner is the last person to sneer, and was quite vexed at having given offence; but, Amy, why did you say it would be better to hear it to-morrow?"

"Because you were just going to read the Bible," replied Amy, "and I thought it might put things into my head, and prevent me from attending."

"But you could have heard it afterwards."

"No," answered Amy, "I generally read the last thing, and then mamma tells me to try and not attend to common things—she says our last thoughts should be of God."

"We should think of him always," said Dora.

"Yes," replied Amy; "but you know, Dora, sleep is like death, and perhaps we may never wake again."

"That never entered my head before," said Dora, gravely. "I shall not go to sleep so comfortably now as I used to do."

"Why not?" asked Amy.

"It is so awful. I should not care if I were you, Amy, and had never done any thing wrong; but I could not bear to die now."

"Oh! Dora," exclaimed Amy, "you know no one could bear to die, if they thought only of what they had done wrong, and I am sure the idea would make me miserable if I did not say my prayers every night; but when I have done that, and remember what mamma has shown me in the Bible about our Saviour, and that God will love us for his sake, though we are so wicked, I am quite comfortable; and sometimes, after I have read my psalm, I can go off to sleep so

happily, with the thought that angels are watching all round my bed."

"Yes," said Dora, earnestly; "if angels watch over any one, they must over you, Amy."

"The Bible says they are sent to take care of us all," replied Amy.

"I should like to think so," said Dora; "but it is so strange."

"It must be true," answered Amy, "if it is in the Bible, and I like to think of them so much. It seems as if one could never be alone; and sometimes I fancy that they are quite near, amongst the trees and flowers. Will you read the psalm to night which says, 'that God will give his angels charge over us?' I don't quite know which it is, but I think I could find it."

Dora read the psalm, but she did not make any more observations; and having thought of every little trifle that could contribute to Amy's comfort, she gave her one kiss of the truest affection, and left her to the enjoyment of a calm and innocent repose. Her own thoughts, when she retired to rest, were far from being happy; indeed she seldom now had any conversation with her cousin, without its being succeeded by a deep consciousness of her own inferiority in those principles, which she was just beginning to consider of the utmost importance; and to this was now added a feeling of great loneliness. Colonel Herbert's return would most probably cause a considerable change in Amy's life. She would be far less dependent upon Emmerton than formerly; and Dora found that her cousin was gradually becoming so necessary to her comfort, that the idea of any arrangement which might prevent her from being with them constantly was excessively painful. Yet they might be separated at any moment. Colonel Herbert might leave the Cottage: he might choose that Amy should travel, and then all sympathy and consolation would be taken away; and while dwelling sadly

upon these probabilities, the image of Emily Morton came before her, and with it the feeling that once she might have been her friend, but that no present attention could atone for the neglect and scorn that had so long been shown her. Dora saw that she had injured her as far as lay in her power, by destroying her comfort for months, and it was vain to hope that now she would be willing to forget it. Amy would have thought differently; but she understood better than Dora what is meant by forgiving our brother "until seventy times seven," and she knew also that there was no christian virtue, however difficult, which Emily Morton did not endeavour to attain.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE sun was shining brightly into Amy's room when she awoke the next morning—so brightly, that she started up in alarm at what she knew must be the lateness of the hour; but the next moment brought the thought of her father to her mind, and with it a feeling of entire happiness and peace. Her mother's gentleness seemed frequently overpowered by her aunt's sternness, but no one would dare to find fault with her in Colonel Herbert's presence; and for the first time Amy felt sure that she could be perfectly at her ease even if Mrs Harrington were there. Yet, on remembering what had passed, and recalling her father's grave, calm features, she was not entirely free from fear. His height, his voice, his age, his manner, placed him in her imagination at an immeasurable distance from her; she could not believe it possible that he should be satisfied with her; he must expect to see some one taller, and cleverer, and more accomplished: if she could but sing and play like Miss Morton, and speak French and Italian like Dora, she should not care; but as it was, she was convinced he must be disappointed; and as these thoughts crossed her mind, Amy stopped in the middle of her toilette, and began repeating French phrases, and reckoning how many drawings she had to show, and playing over the most difficult passages in her music with her fingers on the table. A knock at the door interrupted her. It was Emily Morton, looking so happy, that Amy fancied for the instant she must have some personal cause for joy. But it had been long since Emily had known what it was to be light-hearted for herself. Peaceful

and contented she could always be; but when her countenance was the most brightened by smiles, and her voice sounded the most cheerfully, the happiness of others rather than her own was invariably the cause. She had learnt to "weep with those that weep," and now she was learning to "rejoice with those that rejoiced."

"You would have looked more frightened, yesterday, Amy," she said, "if I had told you breakfast was ready, and every one wondering at your absence."

"Ah, yes," replied Amy; "but I cannot feel frightened at any thing this morning, excepting—I am afraid perhaps you will think it wrong—but do you think papa will be pleased with me? I don't mean exactly with my face, and my manner, because he will not care so much about that, as I am his child; but will he think me very stupid, and dull, and different from every body else?"

"If he should feel as I do," said Emily, as she fastened Amy's dress, and smoothed her dark ringlets, "he will love you so dearly, that he will not be inclined to criticise any thing; but we must not wait to talk now—breakfast is really ready, and your uncle asked me to come for you."

"My uncle!" said Amy; "but shall we not be in the school-room as usual?"

"No," replied Emily: "every one was so late this morning, that Mrs Harrington thought it better not."

"And will all the company be in the breakfast-room, then?" said Amy, in great alarm; "and am I the last?"

"Not quite," replied Emily: "Mrs Danvers is not come down yet; and there is a special place left for you at the bottom of the table, between your papa and your uncle."

"I do not think I can go," said Amy, stopping as she was about to leave the room; "there will be so many—and it will be just like seeing papa quite new —I can hardly recollect now what he was like last night."

"But he asked so often if your cousins had seen you, and was so anxious about you," replied Emily, "he could scarcely attend to any thing else; and your mamma was obliged to beg him not to have you disturbed, or I am sure he would have sent for you half an hour ago."

"If I thought he would not be disappointed, I should not care," said Amy, as she moved slowly along the gallery; "but I know all my ideas will go when he speaks to me, and then he will think me so dull, and be so vexed."

"Will you, dearest, try and not think of yourself at all?" replied Emily. "It is distrusting your papa's affection to have such fancies, and it will do you harm in every way."

"I would if I could," answered Amy; "but I must wish to please him."

"I do not say there is any harm in it," replied Emily, "only it will make you awkward and uncomfortable if you dwell upon it; whatever you feel, however, it will last but a short time; you will be quite at home with him in a few days."

Amy was very much inclined to pause when they reached the breakfast-room, and continued talking, but Emily hastily opened the door, and she was obliged to enter. The room was quite full, and she did not at first see either her mamma or her cousins; even the persons she knew the best seemed quite strangers to her; but Emily led her to the bottom of the room, and Colonel Herbert came eagerly towards her; and as she seated herself in the vacant chair by his side, looked at her with an expression of such deep, heart-

felt satisfaction and love, that she would have been quite satisfied and happy, if bashfulness and humility had not prevented her from understanding its meaning. At first, she was very silent, feeling rather bewildered by the sound of so many voices, and the attention which every one was inclined to bestow upon her, for her father's sudden return had excited a general interest; but by degrees she summoned courage to make a few voluntary observations; and the eagerness with which he answered her so increased her confidence, that before breakfast was ended, she had given him a full description of her life at the Cottage, and her studies and amusements. Colonel Herbert listened with unwearied pleasure. In many a solitary hour he had solaced himself by imagining what his child would be like, and now his fondest expectations were realized. By the side of her cousin Margaret, indeed, Amy might have been little regarded, at least by those who cared only for personal beauty; but to this Colonel Herbert was indifferent. One glance was sufficient to show that Amy was a lady in every word and movement, and with this he was satisfied; and even had her eyes sparkled less brightly, and her countenance been less interesting, he would not have been disappointed; for in the expression of every feature, as well as in every sentiment and feeling, he could read the gentleness, meekness, and purity of the spirit within. Once only, Amy paused in her account, when her attention was caught by a sound which she had not heard before for many months; it was her mother's laugh; so clear, and sweet, and joyous, that it might almost have been the echo of her own; and when she turned eagerly to look at her, and saw the change that even one night had produced, the last remaining shadow which rested on her mind passed away, and she felt that Dr Bailey's words must be true, and that now there was little cause for fear.

"You will wish to go to the Cottage, I suppose, by-and-by," said Mrs Herbert, before they left the breakfast table, "and Amy can go with you."

"There will be the carriage at your disposal," said Mr Harrington, "if you are not afraid to venture out."

Mrs Herbert was very much inclined to take advantage of the offer, but her husband interfered.

"I have a disappointment in store for you both," he said, "not a very great one, though; so my darling Amy, you need not look so blank; but I must ride into the town to-day. I have a message from a very great friend of mine, to his mother and sisters, and I promised, if possible, to deliver it personally on my arrival in England: you will not ask me to delay it, I am sure."

"Oh! no, no," exclaimed Mrs Herbert, recollecting her own feelings a short time since, and the relief any intelligence would have afforded her; "but you will pass the Cottage—cannot you contrive to take us with you so far?"

"Not you," replied Colonel Herbert: "It would be too great a risk in this weather; for if we were once there together, we should spend hours in wandering about and talking over old times, and I have learnt Dr Bailey's opinion by heart—he says there must be no excitement, and no exposure to cold."

Mrs Herbert again urged her wishes, but her husband was inexorable. He prized too dearly his newly recovered treasure, he said, to allow any risk to be run, but he should like, if possible, for Amy to be with him.

"I could walk, indeed I could walk quite well, dear papa," said Amy—"I have done it before; and it would seem such a short distance with you."

"There will be no occasion for anything of the kind," said Mr Harrington; "you can easily go with your papa in the carriage, Amy, as far as the Cottage,

and one of the grooms shall take a horse to meet him there, and then he can go on to the town, and you can return here."

Amy thought the plan delightful, though she wished her mamma could go too, but Colonel Herbert again expressed his fears; and it was agreed that this day at least should be given to perfect rest and quietness. The carriage was ordered almost immediately, and Amy ran up stairs to prepare, but on her way she was stopped by Mary Warner.

"I am so sorry you are going out this morning, for my own sake," she said, "as we shall be gone probably before you return, and I have seen nothing of you; and besides, I wished very much, if I could, to talk to you about Miss Cunningham. Your cousin tells me that you know how angry I made her last night."

"Yes," replied Amy—"I wish I could help you, but I am afraid it is impossible, and papa will be waiting; can you not come to my room whilst I am dressing?"

"If I may," said Mary, "I should be very glad, for I am not at all happy about it."

"But, indeed," answered Amy, "you must not think I can do any thing; you know I am so much younger than Miss Cunningham, and she will never bear my interfering in any way,"

"I do not wish you to interfere," said Mary, "only to tell me whether you think I was very wrong, and if I ought to make any more apologies."

Amy led the way to her room, and endeavoured to give Mary her full attention, though her thoughts would frequently wander to the Cottage, and the drive with her papa, notwithstanding all her efforts to prevent it.

"You know the beginning of the affair, I suppose," said Mary: "It was merely an observation of mine about the advantage it would be to Miss Cunningham

to have music lessons. I know it was foolish in me to say it, because it was just after she had broken down in a piece she was playing; but I am in the habit of saying just what I think, so I often get into scrapes. I cannot tell why she should have been so angry, though; but she declared every one was trying to be impertinent to her, and that it was not my place to say what would be an advantage to her; that I was but a school-girl, and could not possibly know any thing about it; and then she went on muttering something to herself about London, and that all the world would be mistaken; but I could not in the least understand what she meant."

"And did you say you were sorry?" asked Amy.

"Yes, I begged her pardon immediately, but that did not satisfy her, and I saw she wished me to retract, or at least to say something in her praise; but that I could not do—I could not tell her any thing that was not true, for the world."

"No, of course not," said Amy; "but how can I help you?"

"I don't know," replied Mary, "unless you could make Miss Cunningham less angry: she will scarcely speak to me now, and your cousin Margaret has taken her part; and Hester Stanley declares I was very rude, and has been quite lecturing me this morning, and Julia only laughs, and your cousin Dora says it does not signify."

"I cannot think there is any thing to be done," said Amy, "and I wish you would ask some one who knows more about such things than I do."

"I have talked to them all, excepting you," replied Mary, "and I did not come to you for advice exactly, because I do not really think it can be helped; but I am very unhappy, and wanted some one to talk to. I wonder if it was very wrong in me to say what I did: I did not mean any harm; but I always think it right

to speak what is strictly the truth. Should you have done the same if you had been in my place?"

"I daresay I should," replied Amy; "but mamma tells me I ought to be very careful always, and not to make hasty remarks, because I may vex people very much without meaning it."

"That is what I do sometimes, I am afraid," said Mary; "and yet I only mean to be sincere."

"Miss Morton is sincere," replied Amy, thoughtfully; "but I do not think any one could be vexed with her. I should like to be able to say straightforward things as she does."

"Miss Morton is so gentle," said Mary; "and once or twice I have noticed her manner when she has differed from any one, and it appeared as if she were so afraid of annoying them; I do not think any one could take offence at her."

"Perhaps," said Amy, hesitatingly, "it is what every one ought to be, and then ——"

"I know what you mean," exclaimed Mary. "I know I am abrupt. Mamma is often telling me of it, and I daresay I was wrong last night; but what is to be done now?"

"There is papa calling me," said Amy, "I wish I could stay; but indeed I must not keep him waiting."

Mary looked heartily vexed. "I do not think I shall go down stairs again," she said. "We are to set off very soon, and I cannot meet Miss Cunningham."

"But she will not think about such a trifle still," said Amy.

"Yes, indeed, she will," replied Mary: "I cannot tell you how she looked this morning at breakfast. I am sure that piece of music must be a tender subject with her."

Colonel Herbert's voice was again heard calling for Amy, and she had no time to attempt comforting poor Mary.

"I must not wait a moment," she said, as she wished

her "good-bye," "but I daresay I shall see you at Emmerton again, some day or other; and then if Miss Cunningham is not here, we shall be able to enjoy ourselves a great deal more."

Mary could hardly say with truth that she ever wished to come to Emmerton again, she was feeling so annoyed with herself, and almost every one about her; but she could and did express a most sincere hope of meeting Amy, at some future time, and they parted with mutual feelings of kindness and interest. As they passed through the hall Miss Cunningham was at the drawing-room door. She did not notice Amy, though she had not spoken to her before that morning, but her contracted brow, and curling lip, portended no common storm. Amy was too happy to think of her; she was standing by her father's side listening to his parting words to Mrs Herbert, and caring only for the pleasure before her; and when he stopped to give the necessary directions to the coachman, she was still too much occupied to observe the tone in which Miss Cunningham inquired, "whether any one had seen Margaret lately, as she must speak to her directly."

The carriage drove off; and the footman at the door was dispatched in search of Margaret, who soon made her appearance, with a face of eager curiosity, which was quickly clouded when she saw the expression of her friend's countenance.

"What do you want with me?" she asked: "I was very busy in the school-room; I hope it is something of consequence."

"Of course it is," was the reply, "or I should not have sent for you. But it will not do to talk about it here; you must come to my room."

"Tell me whom it concerns," said Margaret. "Is it any thing about London?"

But Miss Cunningham either did not hear, or would

not answer. She led the way to her own apartment, and carefully bolting the door, exclaimed, with a scornful laugh, "Well, Margaret, I wish you joy: it is all settled, and you are going."

"Going! settled!"—repeated Margaret: "it cannot be true; no, I am sure it is not: you would not look in that way, if it were."

"Yes, but I should, though," exclaimed Lucy, "for it is quite true you are going; but you will not have me to go with you; that is all I wished to say."

"Pray, pray, Lucy," said Margaret, "do not tease me in this way. How do you know it is settled?"

"Because," replied Miss Cunningham, rising from the seat on which she had thrown herself, and walking quickly about the room—"because papa and Mr Harrington and Colonel Herbert have been talking of it. Papa said he must make one more effort before we went home, and he mentioned the subject directly after breakfast; and when Colonel Herbert heard it, he said he should be obliged to be in London about Easter; and then Mr Harrington turned completely round, and declared his being there would make all the difference in the world, and that he should certainly consent, and so they said it was settled; but they did not ask me," she continued more vehemently, "and they shall find that I can have a will as well as themselves. I will never, no never, consent to be treated again as I have been treated here. To be taught by that Miss Morton —I would rather stay at home all the days of my life; and those school-girls too—actually Miss Julia Stanley had the impertinence to say, just now, that she should be glad to hear me play after I had had lessons, and see if I were improved: not that there is any chance of our meeting. London is a very different place from the country; and that she will soon know."

"Oh!" said Margaret, soothingly, "she will never come in your way there."

"But Miss Morton, that Miss Morton," exclaimed Lucy. "I am quite in earnest, Margaret: you may talk for ever, you may go down upon your knees to me, and I will never agree to go if she does."

"Dear Lucy," said Margaret, covering her with kisses, and speaking in her most persuasive voice, "you know how much I love you, and how miserable I shall be without you; you are only saying this in joke, I am sure."

"You may be sure of any thing you like, it does not signify to me; nothing can make me change."

"But you will not care when those girls are gone away," said Margaret: "you are merely vexed because they are so rude."

"Vexed!" repeated Miss Cunningham; "when did I say I was vexed? who cares for school-girls? how can they know good music from bad?"

"No, to be sure not," said Margaret; "and Julia Stanley cannot tell a note."

"I never knew that," exclaimed Lucy, rather pacified. "How foolish she would have looked, if I had asked her to sit down and play it better."

"I wish you had done it, with all my heart," said Margaret; "but it is not too late now: they are here still,—let us go into the school-room and say something. I should enjoy making her ashamed of herself, and we shall not have another opportunity; for, as you observe, there is no chance of meeting her in London."

Margaret waited anxiously to hear what effect her words would have, and to remark whether the mention of London would bring back the thought of Emily Morton. But Miss Cunningham had now seized upon this new idea, and forgot that her indignation had been excited by any one but Julia. "Are they all there?" she said: "half the pleasure would be gone, if there was no one by."

"They were all there when I came to you," replied

Margaret; "but we must make haste, for Dora was wishing to take them round to the further side of the lake this morning, because it is the only part of the grounds they have not seen."

Miss Cunningham hardly waited to hear the end of the sentence; she hastened down stairs, and to her great delight found the whole party lingering round the fire in the school-room, wishing to go out, yet unwilling to brave the cold. If Margaret had been rather quicker in perception, and not quite so anxious, she might have been amused at this moment in watching her friend's manner. Evidently she had determined on saying something very severe, which should put Julia completely to the blush; but in her great eagerness and her extreme dulness, she failed entirely, for she merely walked up to the fire-place, stationed herself immediately in front of Julia, and in a sharp, cross tone, said, "You found fault with my music just now; I should like to know if you can play it better."

Julia stared, and answered, "Oh, dear no—who would attempt to vie with you?"

"You are right, Margaret," exclaimed Miss Cunningham; "she cannot play a note. Margaret told me so, just now," she added, turning to Julia, "and so I was resolved I would ask you."

"You are quite welcome to ask any thing you like," replied Julia, coolly. "I am not in the least ashamed of not being able to play at all. Perhaps I might be, if I pretended to know what I was ignorant of, and then broke down before a large party."

Miss Cunningham's countenance expressed unutterable feelings of anger and disgust; and Dora, really alarmed lest a quarrel should ensue, quickly interposed, and begging they would prepare for their walk immediately, hastened Julia out of the room.

"It is your fault, it is all your fault, Margaret," exclaimed Lucy, when they were again left together;

"you are always getting me into scrapes; and that girl, that odious girl, why did she ever come near the place?"

"Really, Lucy," began Margaret, "I do not see what reason you have to blame me," and then recollecting how important it was that her friend should be soothed, she added more gently, "I could not have supposed any one would behave so rudely as she has done."

"I shall go home," said Miss Cunningham: "I have had nothing but vexation ever since I came here, and I will not bear it any longer."

"But Lord Rochford has promised to stay till after New Year's day," observed Margaret. "You know we cannot have any one else, because it was poor Edward's birth-day."

"Papa will do as I wish him," said Lucy: "if I want to go home he will not prevent me."

"And he will do as you wish about London, you may be sure," continued Margaret; who, in her extreme anxiety, could not avoid recurring to the subject, even at the risk of again exciting Miss Cunningham's vehemence.

"I have told you a hundred and fifty times before," was the reply, "that my lessons are quite different from every thing else: you do not think I have been so silly as not to try all I could about it long before this."

"But you will stay over New Year's day," said Margaret, coaxingly: "if we try hard, we may be able to manage something together."

The notion seemed rather plausible, and Miss Cunningham condescended to say that she would see about it; perhaps she might, if she were not plagued any more with the school-girls.

"They will be gone soon," said Margaret: "and if you would come with me now, you might get quite out of their way, and not speak to them again."

"Where are you going, then?" asked Lucy.

"I wished very much to walk to our old steward's cottage. He has had a pony training for me some time, just like Dora's. I want to see it, and mamma always scolds us if we go out of the grounds alone; but she will not mind if you are with me."

Miss Cunningham walked to the window to look at the weather, which certainly, but for the cold, would have been very inviting, although the melting of the ice and snow rendered the walks in some places dirty and disagreeable.

"My pony is much more beautiful than Dora's," said Lucy, "and much larger, too. I wonder she likes riding such a little thing. Is yours the same size, Margaret?"

"I do not know exactly; but do come and see it, it is not very far. I don't think Dora will be able to get to the other side of the lake, as she wished, and if so, we shall have the girls back again in a minute."

"I shall go away, then," said Lucy.

"Oh, do not do that," exclaimed Margaret. "You will be so dull, for I cannot be with you, because they will all be setting off, and mamma will find out if I am in the house, and make me stay with them. There is no way of avoiding it, unless we go out."

"Is it far?" asked Lucy.

"Oh, no, only through the plantations, and then across a field. I do not think we have ever been there with you. The field next to the one we shall go through is very steep indeed, and the river runs at the bottom of it, and I daresay it might be muddy and dirty just by the banks, but our path will not be at all so."

"Well," said Lucy, sulkily, "if we must go, we must—any thing is better than those girls."

Margaret thought the same; of all things she dreaded another quarrel, and she hoped, by a little

quiet flattery, to bring her friend, when they were alone, into something like good humour; and without waiting for Lucy to change her mind, she hurried her up stairs to prepare for the walk.

Amy, in the meanwhile, was enjoying herself to the utmost. A very short time had sufficed to remove almost all dread of her father, and only enough remained to increase the interest of his conversation. At first it was entirely about India, and his travels; and Amy listened as she would have done to a romance or a fairy tale, and thought her papa a greater person than ever, as she discovered how much he knew, and the wonders he had seen; and then again he recurred to his long silence, and the uneasiness he knew it must have occasioned them, and spoke of the eagerness with which he always inquired for letters, and the pleasure it had been to hear from her of all she had been doing; "though you did not tell me many of the things you mentioned this morning," he said—"the little things, I mean."

"I should write differently now, papa," replied Amy. "I did not quite know what to say then, and I always fancied you were a great man, and would not care for little trifles."

"But, Amy," said Colonel Herbert, "if persons are really great, they can care for, and attend to, every thing. It is only those who think themselves great, when they are not, who despise trifles."

"It is very nice," said Amy; "but I cannot think now that you really like to hear about my donkey, and my flowers, and my lessons."

"I will tell you when I am tired of it all," replied her father; "but now you must talk to me a little about Emmerton, and your cousins. Do you like them very much, and is it very pleasant staying there?"

"I like Dora, papa," exclaimed Amy—"so much —so very much. She is so kind, and so thoughtful,

and yet"—she added, pausing—"I do not think she is kind and thoughtful either, not to every one at least."

Colonel Herbert smiled. "You seem to have made a new discovery," he said. "Is Dora's character such a puzzle to every one?"

"I never thought about it before," replied Amy; "and now I do not think I quite know what she is; but I love her very much, though she is not at all like Miss Morton."

"Miss Morton is the governess, is she not?" said Colonel Herbert: "I used to know her very well as a child."

"She is not exactly the governess," replied Amy; "but she teaches my cousins some things, and she has taught me too. Emmerton would be so different if she were not there."

"I thought," said Colonel Herbert, "that you were always delighted with Emmerton before your uncle came."

"Ah! yes," answered Amy; "but that was before I knew any better; when I only thought about all the old lords and ladies who they said used to live there. There was nothing real then; but I liked to make them out very good and beautiful—and sometimes I wished I had lived in those days, because no one I could ever hear of was quite good, except mamma and Mrs Walton; now, I never care about such things, for Miss Morton is better, I think, than I ever imagined, and prettier too: don't you think she is?"

"She has a very sweet face, certainly," replied Colonel Herbert; "but, Amy, how good you ought to be after being so much with her."

Amy looked rather grave: "I have thought of that sometimes," she said; "but I hope you will not be very much vexed with me, dear papa; indeed I do mean to try so hard."

"You must not think I doubted it, my love," he

replied; "but, you know, we shall be obliged to answer for the use we have made of our friends, just as much as for the use we have made of our money or talents. I do not think, though, that Miss Morton has been thrown away upon you."

"It was mamma who made me see Miss Morton's goodness," replied Amy. "I do not think I should have noticed it half as much if she had not been so like her; and that was the first thing which made me love her. Margaret and Dora did not appear to think any thing about her for some time."

"And do they now?" asked Colonel Herbert.

"I am not quite sure as to Margaret," replied Amy; "but I think Dora does, though she will not acknowledge it; and, by-and-by, I daresay, she will love her as I do, and then Miss Morton will be happier; for it must be very dreadful, papa, to live all by one's self, without any person to care for one."

"Who does live so, Amy? Not Miss Morton, I am sure, from your account of her."

"Yes, but indeed she does live alone very much. Rose is a great deal too young to be a companion to her."

"Does she say herself that she has no one to care for her?" said Colonel Herbert, looking rather graver than usual.

Amy thought for an instant, and then answered, "I do not think she would say so, because she told me the other night that wherever God was, was our home; and she is so good, that I daresay loving him does instead of friends; but, papa, I am afraid I shall never feel like that."

"It is a hard lesson," replied Colonel Herbert, as he looked at his child, and thought what his feelings would be if he were obliged to part from her. "But here we are at the Cottage, Amy," he added, after a few moments' silence. "I must go over it quickly, for I have but little time to spare."

Amy eagerly ran into the house, but her father followed more slowly. Every tree and stone served to recall some vision of the past, some walk, or book, or conversation, which at the time he had been hardly conscious of enjoying, but upon which he now looked back with almost melancholy regret. Amy soon noticed the change in his manner; and leaving him to his own reflections, wandered about by herself, finding sufficient occupation in repeating the instructions which Mrs Herbert had sent to the servants, inquiring for the people in the village, whom she had seldom before left for so long a time, and visiting her pet rabbits and her donkey. It was a slight disappointment to see her father so abstracted; but the feeling quickly passed away, when he made her go with him into the drawing-room, and began pointing out a few alterations which he hoped to make in the house, and talking of the new piano he intended to procure for her when next he went to London; and then showed her the books he wished her to read, promising that, if possible, some portion of his time should be given every day solely to her, to perfect her in the knowledge of history and languages, before he took her abroad. Every word realised more fully the blessing of her father's return; and though the time thus spent was but short, it was sufficient to open many new sources of enjoyment; and when at length Colonel Herbert placed her in the carriage by herself, she was so occupied with all he had been saying, that she forgot to give directions for being driven to the rectory, though at another time a visit there would have been her greatest delight. The servants, however, had received previous instructions, and Amy soon found herself in Mrs Walton's drawing-room, recounting to her all the changes of sorrow and of joy which she had experienced since last they met.

CHAPTER XXV.

Miss Cunningham's temper was not likely to be improved by the pleasures of her wintry walk, and this Margaret quickly perceived, for it required all her powers of flattery and persuasion to prevent her from turning back at every step; and although perfectly sensible of the importance of humouring and soothing her, it was impossible to avoid occasionally showing a dislike to cross looks and harsh words. The walk through the plantation was tolerably firm, for the heat of the sun had not entirely penetrated it, but the open field was in many places very unpleasant, and but for the thought of her pony, Margaret would on no account have attempted to proceed. Miss Cunningham slowly followed her, sighing and muttering, and at length stopping at a gate leading into the adjoining fields, she protested nothing should induce her to move one step farther.

"It is but a very little way," said Margaret: "you can see the cottage just among the trees—I daresay the lane will not be as bad as this."

"You can go by yourself, can't you?" replied Lucy: "there is no good in both of us getting into a mess."

"But I wanted to know whether you thought the pony as pretty as Dora's. I am not going to have it, if it is not."

"Then we must come another day," was the reply. "I could as soon wade through a pond as this field."

"I do think," said Margaret, looking over the gate, "that it is much drier in this other field, and there is

a bridge down at the bottom over the stream; I should not wonder if we could get to the cottage by going over it."

As she spoke, Margaret was about to open the gate, when she heard some one repeating her name, and turning round, saw Rose and Miss Morton, who were hastening towards her from the bottom of the field.

"I have been trying," said Emily, as she came up, "to find my way to Stephen's cottage, but the lane is in such a state, that it is almost impassable—at least for Rose—so I must beg you to take care of her for a few minutes, while I make another attempt. I shall be within sight, and almost within hearing, the whole way."

"It is very provoking," observed Margaret: "is there no mode of reaching the cottage by the next field and the bridge? it looks a great deal drier."

"No," replied Emily; "you would find a hedge in your way, unless you went a considerable distance round; but can I say any thing to Stephen for you? I must see him to-day, for his daughter is ill; and there are some directions for her medicine which no one can give but myself."

"You may tell him," said Margaret, "that I want very much to see the pony, and that I shall not have it, unless it is quite as pretty as Dora's."

"Shall I say that it is to be sent for?" asked Emily.

"You may if you will—that is, I must speak to papa about it first; but I suppose there will be no objection to my having it to try."

Miss Morton secretly wished that Margaret would learn to be more grateful and courteous in her expressions; and then, charging Rose to walk up and down the field, in order to keep herself warm, and on no account to give her sister any trouble, she walked towards the cottage. She was hardly beyond hearing,

when Miss Cunningham began complaining of the trouble that had been caused, and wishing that they had not met; declaring, at the same time, that she would not stay in such a bog for any one: it would be much better in the other field, and she should go there.

"Come, Rose," said Margaret, opening the gate, "you must go first. I will lift you over the bad places, and then we can keep to the dry part of the path."

"I was told to stay here," said Rose, "and besides, I am never allowed to walk in that field, it is so steep, and there is water at the bottom."

"You must do as you are told by us now," exclaimed Miss Cunningham, "so come directly."

Still Rose resisted. Emily would not like it, she said, and would not be able to find her.

"It does not signify," observed Margaret, desirous from selfish motives to please her friend in every fancy.

"She can stay here if she wishes it. It can make no difference which side of the gate we are. If you are such a naughty child, Rose, you must remain by yourself, but don't be frightened, we shall not be out of sight."

Rose was half inclined to follow, but Miss Cunningham shut the gate, and she was prevented. The path certainly was much drier and more agreeable; and Margaret and Lucy paced up and down for several minutes, until catching sight of some animals in a field adjoining the stream, Margaret declared they were horses, and she was sure her pony must be amongst them, and calling to Rose to remain exactly where she was till they came back, she hastened to satisfy her curiosity. Rose begged her not to go out of sight; but Margaret did not think it worth while to attend; and although the distance was not very great, the poor child immediately began to fancy she was left, and

stood looking anxiously through the gate, and entreating Margaret to return, till she gradually worked herself into a state of great distress, which was brought to its climax, when, on turning round to see if Miss Morton were coming, she perceived that a few cows had been driven into the field, and that one of them was moving rather quickly in her direction. In an agony of alarm, Rose attempted to open the gate, but it resisted all her endeavours; and then, forgetting every thing but her desire to escape from the cows, she made a desperate effort, and succeeded in scrambling over it, and seeing her sister standing by the bridge at the bottom of the field, ran at full speed towards her. Margaret saw, and called loudly to her to be careful, but the poor little girl's fright prevented her from attending, while the swiftness with which she ran, and the steepness of the hill, took from her the power of stopping, and in one moment, while yet unconscious of her danger, her foot slipped; her head struck against the projecting branch of a tree, and she fell with violence into the water. Margaret's scream of horror was echoed by Miss Cunningham, who immediately ran from the spot, calling loudly for assistance, while Margaret, with greater presence of mind, caught hold of a broken bough that lay upon the ground, and bent over the stream, in the hope of reaching her sister's dress, and so being able to save her. But the rapidity with which it flowed frustrated her hopes, and in another minute all probability of rescuing the unfortunate child would have been at an end, when the man whose cows had been the principal cause of the accident came to her assistance, and by the aid of a longer stick, and more powerful arm, succeeded in placing Rose once more in safety.

Margaret's first feeling was one of overpowering relief and gratitude; but when she looked at her sister's face as she lay perfectly senseless in the labourer's

arms, her terror returned; and unable to decide upon what was next to be done, she stood by her in silent despair, unconscious of the approach of Miss Morton, who, alarmed by Miss Cunningham's cries, as she was returning from the cottage, had quickly guessed the cause, and was hurrying towards them, followed by another man.

"To the Hall! carry her to the Hall!" were the first words she said; and they were spoken so calmly, that but for the expression of her countenance, no one could have guessed the extent of her feeling.

The man in an instant obeyed, and strode rapidly across the field, but Emily's anxiety gave her for the time a strength far beyond her nature; and she kept pace with him, and even occasionally outstripped him, urging him at every instant to hasten, for that life and death depended on his speed. Margaret and Miss Cunningham were left far behind, and as they drew near to the house, almost unconsciously, Margaret lingered. Neither she nor Lucy had spoken during their walk, and ample time had been given to both for reflection. At first Margaret had felt stunned by the alarm; but as she thought of meeting her mother, the horrible idea crossed her mind, that she had not been entirely guiltless of the accident.

"Oh, Lucy!" she exclaimed, when they stopped at the Hall door, "why did we leave her?"

"She will get well soon," said Miss Cunningham; but her manner was subdued, and she spoke less confidently than usual.

Margaret did not wait to reply, but hurried to Miss Morton's room. Rose, however, had not been carried there, and the house was in such commotion, that it was some time before she could obtain any information as to what had been done; but at last she was told that Mr Harrington had ridden off himself for Dr Bailey, and that Mrs Harrington and Miss Morton

were together using every means for restoring the poor child to life. Morris named the room to which Rose had been taken, but when Margaret tried the door, it was bolted; and though there were voices within, no attention was paid to her entreaties for admittance. As she turned away in disappointed misery, Dora met her.

"Oh! Margaret," she exclaimed, "is it your doing?"

"No, no," replied Margaret, "why are you so cruel as to say it? Do you know how she is?"

"Better," answered Dora, trying to command herself: "she has shown signs of life; but they will not let you in."

"Who will not?" inquired Margaret.

"Mamma and Emily Morton: they are talking together, and they have fastened the door. Hark! you can hear them now."

Mrs Harrington's voice sounded strangely in the chamber of anxiety and fear: she was evidently in a state of the utmost excitement, and Emily's gentle answers seemed hardly listened to for an instant. Dora and Margaret gazed at each other in silent amazement: in a few minutes the bolt was hastily and angrily withdrawn, and Emily Morton entered the passage. Dora caught her dress, and was about to speak; but when she looked in her face, she felt it was impossible. Such intense suffering was expressed in every feature, in her firmly compressed lip, and the ghastly paleness of her cheek, and the contraction of her forehead, that Dora did not dare inquire the cause. Yet even then, Emily had a thought for others. "Rose is better," she said, and pointed to the open door, and then turning away, she passed in a moment from their sight.

"What can be the matter?" exclaimed Margaret.

"Mamma is angry that Rose was left, I suppose," replied Dora.

"She would have thought nothing about it, but for

the accident," said Margaret, with a painful consciousness of being infinitely more to blame than Miss Morton.

"I don't know any of the particulars," observed Dora; "no one has had any time to ask; but I wish you would tell me now."

Margaret was beginning her account, when the door again opened, and Mrs Harrington seeing them in the passage, called Dora into the room, and ordered Margaret to send Morris to her immediately.

Margaret delivered the message, and then went to the school-room, where she found Miss Cunningham seated by the fire, with a book in her hand, and not only composed but cheerful.

"You are not unhappy, now, Margaret, are you?" she said; "I daresay little Rose will be quite well again to-morrow: Susan Reynolds told me just now that she was a great deal better."

"Yes," replied Margaret; "she is better certainly, she would not be alive else; but it is nonsense to talk of happiness. What will mamma say when she knows how it all occurred?"

"Who is to tell her?" said Lucy. "We need not."

"No," replied Margaret; "but I rather suspect mamma thinks it is owing to some carelessness of Emily Morton's. She was talking to her very angrily a little while ago, and when Emily came away she looked like a frightened ghost."

"But it was careless in her: what business had she to trouble us with the care of such a child? she might have known that it would be very inconvenient."

"If mamma has a notion that it was her fault, she will send her away," said Margaret, while a feeling of satisfaction dawned upon her mind as she thought of the London journey.

"Will she, indeed?" exclaimed Lucy; "then we shall enjoy ourselves after all."

Margaret shrank from having her own idea put into words. "You must not be too sure of that, Lucy," she replied: "I only said that Emily would be sent away if mamma considered the accident her fault, but, in fact, it was no one's fault; and this she will find when inquiries are made."

"Mrs Harrington is coming now," said Lucy: "I am sure that is her voice; she is speaking to Dora."

Margaret trembled extremely. "I hope mamma is not going to ask about it, Lucy."

"What are you afraid of?" replied Lucy: "we had nothing to do with it."

Margaret's conscience did not fully acquit her; but her uneasiness was lessened when her mother entered, still talking to Dora. "I have ordered the carriage, and she shall go," were her first words. "I shall never bear the sight of her again, and she wishes it herself. She says Mrs Walton will receive her."

"But was it really her fault, mamma?" asked Dora.

"Whose could it be?" replied Mrs Harrington. "She left her—left her in that field, notwithstanding my strict charge to the contrary, for such a child could never have opened the gate: and she must have known that there was danger."

"But Margaret and Lucy were near," continued Dora.

"So she says," replied Mrs Harrington; "but they could not have been, or they would have taken care of her."

"Where were you when poor little Rose fell in?" asked Dora, appealing to her sister.

Margaret was about to reply, but a glance from Miss Cunningham stopped her, and she suffered her to speak instead.

"We were standing near the bridge, looking for Margaret's pony; and when we saw what had happened, we ran directly and tried to save her."

"I told you so, Dora," exclaimed Mrs Harrington, in extreme indignation. "I knew she equivocated: she shall not remain in my house another hour."

Mrs Harrington rank the bell violently, and Dora felt almost too much alarmed to speak; she did, however, suggest that Margaret and Miss Cunningham should tell the whole story, as she felt certain there must be some mistake. Again Margaret would have replied; but Miss Cunningham, who was standing at her side, pressed her hand as a signal for silence, and at that instant the servant entered.

"Let the pony-carriage be ordered directly," said Mrs Harrington: "I wish it to be at the door in an hour's time. I will not hear another word, Dora," she added: "the case is quite clear. Go immediately, and let Miss Morton know when the carriage will be ready."

"Oh, mamma!" exclaimed Dora, while tears rushed to her eyes—"if you would send Morris."

"Dora, I will be obeyed instantly," said Mrs Harrington.

"But Amy is not come home yet, mamma," persisted Dora, seizing eagerly upon any chance of a respite.

"Did you not hear me order the pony-carriage?" was the answer. "Of course, I knew that your cousin was not returned."

Mrs Harrington left the room, and Dora was about reluctantly to follow, when the servant came back to say that the carriage was just coming down the avenue, and to inquire whether it would make any difference in the order.

Dora for once in her life heartily wished that Amy had remained longer away, for she feared that even less time might now be allowed Miss Morton; and she fancied every delay might be of use. "I will ask mamma myself," she said, unwilling that any thing

should be settled without her knowledge. And after lingering a few minutes longer, she walked slowly away; and Margaret and Miss Cunningham were again left alone.

"I hope you give me credit for my management, Margaret," said Lucy. "We have had a happy escape."

"I don't know," replied Margaret: "it must all come out by-and-by."

"Why, I should like to know? Why should any thing more be said if we keep our own counsel?"

"But Emily Morton," replied Margaret,—"she will never allow herself to be sent away without making some defence."

"If she does," answered Lucy, "what will it signify? You may see your mamma does not believe her."

"But if mamma should ask us any more questions, we could not tell a story about it, you know."

"Did I tell one just now?" asked Miss Cunningham. "Was not every word exactly the truth?"

"Yes," said Margaret; "but I think Dora suspects something."

"Never mind Dora," replied Lucy; "she cannot know what we do not choose to tell. It is quite silly of you, Margaret, to be so fidgetty: this is just all that we wanted; and if we only take care, we shall go to London, and enjoy ourselves to our hearts' content. You would have been delighted at the idea yesterday; and now that every thing has fallen out just as we wished, you look grave."

"It is not just as I wished, though," repeated Margaret, rather angrily, "it is not at all pleasant to have poor little Rose so ill."

"Certainly that is disagreeable," said Lucy: "but it is a mere trifle; she will be quite well to-morrow: besides, what would you do? You would not dare

make a great fuss, and complain of yourself to your mamma."

"No, indeed," exclaimed Margaret; "I would suffer any thing first. I should say nothing about it, if Emily Morton were not going."

"But that is the very point," urged Miss Cunningham. "It is the principal reason we have for being silent. London—think of London, Margaret;—and nothing would induce me to go if Miss Morton went too. How much you would miss me if I were not there."

"To be sure," replied Margaret, after a short pause, "we have not said any thing that is not true; and Emily Morton is quite able to defend herself; and if mamma will not believe her, it is not our fault."

"Certainly not: let us leave her to herself; and when she is once out of the house every thing will go right."

Margaret's conscience told her that all could not be right; that there was such a thing as a practical falsehood: but she had so long accustomed herself to trifling prevarications, that her self-reproach was not very great. Probably she would not have felt any, if the consequences of her deceit had been less important. Miss Cunningham perceived that she had gained an advantage by the mention of London, and, eagerly pursuing the subject, expatiated in glowing terms upon the amusement they should find there, till Margaret forgot by what means the pleasure was to be obtained; and by the time the conversation was over, was so strengthened in her resolution, that Miss Cunningham's fears were completely at rest.

CHAPTER XXVI.

To Dora's relief—her cousin's return made no difference in Mrs Harrington's plan—there was still nearly an hour before her; and in that time it was barely possible that her papa might return and insist upon Emily's remaining at least another day. It seemed, indeed, the height of cruelty to insist upon her going at such a time, for the state in which poor little Rose continued, excited the greatest alarm. She had shown signs of consciousness, but the increasing fever and her continual moanings added every moment to Mrs Harrington's anxiety. She walked from room to room, and from window to window, listening for every sound; now upon the point of setting off herself in search of Dr Bailey; then seating herself by the side of her child's bed, with the determination that nothing should induce her to quit it; and again, as she felt the rapid pulse, and heard the sounds of suffering, starting up with the intention of seeking for some one who might advise her at once what was most necessary to be done. Dora, after remaining a short time, anxious to delay giving the painful information to Emily, went to see her cousin, in the hope of being the first to break to her, gradually, the painful news; but Amy had not been two minutes in the house before she had heard all, and rather more than all, for the news of Miss Morton's intended departure had spread rapidly, and was of course coupled with the accident.

Amy's first intelligence was, that Miss Morton had left Rose playing by the side of the stream; that the child had fallen in, and would have been lost but for

Miss Cunningham's screams; that she was not expected to live more than an hour; and that Miss Morton was to go away immediately. The last words were so surprising, that Amy did not at first entirely comprehend them: she was bewildered between her deep sorrow for Rose and her dread of Miss Morton's departure; and stood for a few moments in a state of the most painful indecision, unwilling even to go to her mamma till she had learnt the truth more certainly. "Going," she repeated: "do you really mean that Miss Morton is going now?"

"Yes, now, miss," replied Morris, in a short pert voice, and rejoicing secretly in the thought of getting rid of any one that patronised Susan Reynolds, who had lately become almost her rival. "The carriage is coming round directly: I think Jolliffe is just gone up to the stable to put the ponies in."

Amy did not wait to hear more. She flew to Emily's room; but just as she reached it Dora stopped her.

"Oh! Amy," she exclaimed, looking earnestly at her, "I see by your face that you know every thing. What is to be done for Emily?"

"I am sure it cannot be true," said Amy. "My aunt would never send her away now."

"But it is quite true," replied Dora; "nothing will have any effect. I have said all I could; and papa is not here."

"Where is she going?" said Amy. "I must run directly, and speak to mamma: she will entreat for her; and my aunt will never be able to refuse her. Has no one told mamma about it?"

Dora was about to reply, when Emily Morton opened the door, and in a voice so totally changed that Amy would scarcely have recognised it, asked them to come in.

The room presented a very different aspect from

that which it usually wore. The pictures from the walls were lying about on the table and in the chairs; the floor was covered with trunks, band-boxes, and dresses; and the books had been taken from the shelves, and were piled together in regular order, preparatory to their being packed.

Amy did not speak; but Dora exclaimed instantly, "Oh! Emily, why should you do this? you cannot manage it yourself."

"I must be alone," replied Emily: and again her voice sounded so strange, that Amy started. The gentle tone which had once sounded so sweet to her ear was changed for one that was unnaturally deep and hollow. There were no traces of agitation in her face—scarcely even in her manner; but her lips were perfectly colourless, and her eyes were dimmed and sunken.

"You must not,—oh! you must not go," exclaimed Amy, throwing herself into her arms, and bursting into tears.

Emily pointed to the floor, and, with a ghastly smile, said, "Will you help me? The carriage will be here."

Dora knelt down and tried to busy herself with the books, but she could not conceal her emotion; and Emily Morton, as she witnessed for the first time the sympathy of one who had hitherto so painfully neglected her, pressed her lips firmly together, and walked quickly up and down the room.

"I must go to mamma," exclaimed Amy: "she will see my aunt directly; and I am sure she will be able to persuade her."

"No," said Emily, forcing herself to speak, as Amy was about to leave the room; "you must not say any thing to Mrs Herbert. I went to her myself just now, before every thing was settled, that she might not be shocked suddenly; and even then,

though I could speak comfortably to her, I could see how much she suffered. She went immediately to Mrs Harrington, and would have remained with her but for your aunt's insisting to the contrary. I would not for the world that she should be distressed again on my account."

"But she will be so very, very sorry," said Amy; "and I am sure my aunt will listen to her."

"Indeed, it must not be," replied Emily. "Remember what Dr Bailey said: and your mamma will not care so much when she knows where I am going. I have written a note to Mrs Walton, to ask her to receive me for the next few days. I could not go far away whilst——." The sentence remained unfinished; but both Dora and Amy knew well what it meant.

"If you would leave these things," said Dora, "Amy and I could take care of them for you."

"Perhaps it would be best," replied Emily. "I don't think I quite know why they were taken down, for I could not pack them in so short a time."

"Do you know, then, about the carriage?" asked Dora.

"Yes," replied Emily; "Susan Reynolds told me, and offered to help me; but I sent her away. I want nothing now, excepting to know ——"

"How Rose is," continued Amy. "I will go directly, and ask."

Amy ran out of the room, and Dora followed her. "Stop one moment, Amy," she said. "I don't think Emily Morton knows about poor little Rose being worse: when she left her, she thought she was better. It will half kill her to go away when she hears it."

"Let us both go to my aunt, and beg," said Amy, "only for one day. If she would just let her stay to-night, I could be happy."

"You don't know mamma," replied Dora: "she thinks Emily Morton has equivocated."

"Oh!" exclaimed Amy, "no one could think so."

"Mamma believes it firmly; and so there would be no hope of persuading her. But, Amy, I think there is something hidden—something which Margaret and Lucy Cunningham know, only they will not tell. I must go back to mamma. But, perhaps, if you were to talk to them, you might find it out: only be quick."

"Will you let Miss Morton know about Rose, then? and I will try; but I don't know what to say. I wish you could be with me."

"Indeed I must go," replied Dora; "but I will see poor little Rose myself, and then return to Emily for a minute. You will find Margaret and Lucy in the school-room."

"But what does my aunt say?" continued Amy. "Why does she not ask them about it?"

"She would not listen to me just now," said Dora; "and when I left her she was in such an agony about Rose that I did not dare speak to her: indeed, Amy, you are the only person who can do any thing."

Amy did not wait to be again entreated, but went instantly to the school-room. Margaret and Lucy were still there as Dora had told her; and neither of them seemed at all pleased at her interruption.

"Have you seen Rose lately?" asked Amy, hardly knowing how to begin, and yet extremely anxious that no time should be lost.

"No," replied Margaret. "Mamma has sent us word that it is better to keep her quite quiet; and she begs that no one may go to her room except Dora, unless she rings. Morris is there with her too, I believe."

"I should so like to see her," said Amy: "I am afraid she is very ill. Do tell me, Margaret, how it was she fell in."

"She was running fast down the hill," replied Margaret, "and could not stop herself. I shall never

forget what I felt when I saw what was going to happen."

"But how did you get into that field? Somebody said just now you were going to Stephen's cottage—that is not the way to it."

"No," interrupted Miss Cunningham, who began to be uneasy at Amy's questions; "we went down to the water to look at the ponies."

"And I suppose Miss Morton sent Rose to you, then," said Amy.

"No," replied Lucy. "Poor child! she came running to us of her own accord."

"I do so wonder at Miss Morton's leaving her," observed Amy; "she is so particular about her in general."

Miss Cunningham made no reply; and Amy felt quite disheartened. In a few moments, however, she began again.

"I cannot understand it at all, Margaret. What made Miss Morton and Rose go into that field?"

"You are very stupid this morning, I think," exclaimed Lucy. "How can we know what reasons Miss Morton has for doing strange things? And why should you ask so many question?"

"Because," replied Amy, summoning up all her courage, "I cannot think that Miss Morton really did leave Rose all by herself in that dangerous field."

"Then what do you think she did?" asked Lucy.

"I don't know; but it would have been much more like her to have left Rose with you."

"Then you think," exclaimed Miss Cunningham, indignantly, "that Margaret and I have been saying what is not true."

"I don't mean to make you angry," replied Amy, whose naturally timid disposition was for the moment overawed; "but if there is any excuse to be made, Margaret, it would be very, very kind in you to say

something to my aunt. I am sure you would, if you saw how miserable Miss Morton is at the idea of going away."

"What do you wish me to do?" asked Margaret. "Mamma will not listen to me."

"But she would listen to you," continued Amy, "if you had any thing real to tell her,—I mean, not merely an excuse."

"I cannot see," interrupted Miss Cunningham, "why you should interfere and talk to us in this way: you would make out, if you could, that we had been keeping back something. Miss Morton can tell all there is to be told just as well as we can. Come, Margaret, do let us go up stairs; I am quite tired of sitting here in my walking things."

"No, no," exclaimed Amy, seizing her cousin by the dress; "pray, Margaret, do not go yet."

"What good can I do you by staying?" said Margaret, whose resolution was somewhat wavering.

"If you would only tell me," persisted Amy, "if there is any thing that will make my aunt pleased with Miss Morton, I should be so glad. I am sure you never saw any one before look as wretched as she does now."

Margaret seemed inclined to remain; not that she had any intention of confessing the whole truth, but she was hardly able to resist Amy's earnest looks.

"Come, come, Margaret," said Lucy; "I cannot wait any longer. If you say a word more," she added, in a whisper, "it will all come out."

Amy caught the last words, and eagerly repeated them aloud. "Then there is something. Oh, Margaret, you would not be so cruel as to hide it."

"I think you are very unkind and unjust to suspect me of concealing any thing, Amy," replied Margaret, her pride and her fears being awakened by the open accusation. "You may find out what you will, but you will hear nothing from me: I am not going to stay here to be accused of hiding things."

Margaret and Lucy had left the room before Amy could resolve on what was next to be said; and when they were gone she felt for some moments in despair of being able to do any thing for Miss Morton. The time was quickly passing away: she did not dare go to her aunt; and she did not know what might be the consequence of applying to her mamma. Dora was not to be seen; and there was but a very slight hope that either her father or her uncle would return before Emily's departure: and yet she was fully convinced there was some secret between Margaret and Lucy, which for private reasons they did not choose to confess. At first she felt inclined to give up all idea of discovering it, and go again to Miss Morton's room: but the thought of what her distress would be on learning that poor little Rose was getting worse made it seem cruel to rest without another effort; and in the hope of possibly seeing Dora, and obtaining some advice from her, she went up stairs, and lingered about in the gallery into which Rose's bed-room opened.

The window at the end fronted the terrace; and when Amy looked out, she saw Lord Rochford and Mr Cunningham pacing up and down in earnest conversation. At first she thought very little about them; but after waiting in vain for Dora, the idea struck her, that if something were said to Mr Cunningham he might be able to prevail on his sister to tell the whole truth. With the idea, however, came also the doubt, whether it would be right in her to mention the subject. She was but a child; and he might naturally be very much annoyed at her expressing any suspicion of his sister; and even if Lucy and Margaret had done wrong, it seemed unkind to be the means of exposing them: perhaps, if she waited, her uncle might return, and Dora might be able to speak to him—at any rate, it would appear presuming and impertinent; and as Miss Morton was only going to Mrs Walton's, she could

return again the next day if Mr Harrington wished it. Of Mr Cunningham's kind feeling towards herself, Amy had little doubt; he had shown it in the most marked way, especially since he had overheard the conversation on the preceding evening; and but for this it would hardly have been possible to think of taking so great a liberty: but with the certainty that he would willingly assist her, if it were in his power, she could not entirely banish from her mind the thought of applying to him. Again and again she endeavoured to decide whether it would be right, but still her mind continued in the same painful state of indecision. The thought of Emily Morton made her determine to go at once and beg him to interfere; and the remembrance that it would appear unkind, and unsuited to her age, made her shrink from the idea, and resolve to wait patiently a short time longer in the hope of seeing Dora. Very earnestly she longed to go at once to her mamma; but it would vex Emily, and perhaps might make Mrs Herbert ill, and Lucy and Margaret would consider her very ill-natured. This last argument, however, did not seem a powerful one. If it were unkind to them to mention the subject, it would be still more unkind to Emily Morton to be silent: and again poor Amy began to doubt, and stood at the window, looking at Mr Cunningham, and wishing with all her heart that some one would appear to tell her what she ought to do. Whilst still hesitating, Susan Reynolds came into the gallery, followed by Morris, the only one of the servants who had admission into the chamber of the sick child. Amy was going to beg that her cousin Dora might be sent to her, but Morris's movements were too quick; the bed-room door was opened but for one instant, and when it closed, Amy was so vexed and disappointed that her fortitude entirely gave way.

"Oh, Miss Herbert!" exclaimed Susan, as she

noticed her distress, "pray don't cry so; Miss Rose may get better after all; though, to be sure, Morris says she never saw a poor child so ill before in all her life."

"Is she so very much worse, then?" said Amy.

"Oh yes, miss," replied Susan. "Morris says, if the doctor does not soon come, she thinks it will be no good having sent for him. She is quieter now; but a little while ago she was moaning when I passed the door, so that one might hear her all along the gallery. And, oh! Miss Herbert, isn't it dreadful about Miss Morton's going away?—she who is so good and kind to every one. And what shall I do without her?"

"I wonder whether Rose asks for her?" said Amy.

"She did at first, I believe, miss," answered Susan; "but Morris says she is all wild and wandering again now, and does not know any one."

"Oh! how I wish I knew what to do," exclaimed Amy, forgetting that Susan was near.

"Miss Morton will never see Miss Rose again, I should think," said Susan, "if she goes away now. Mrs Bridget and Morris, and all of them, think she won't live out the night."

"And does Miss Morton know it?" inquired Amy.

"She does now, miss," replied Susan. "She asked me herself, and I was obliged to tell. And it was miserable to see how she looked; I thought she would have gone off quite."

Amy made no reply, but turned to the window to see if Mr Cunningham were still below. While Susan was speaking she had made up her mind as to what was to be done. Emily's wretchedness overcame every other consideration; and without further delay she hastened to the terrace. Mr Cunningham paused in his conversation directly he saw her; and when she came up, breathless and silent from fear and agitation, he inquired eagerly for Rose.

"May I speak to you?" replied Amy, unheeding his question. "Pray don't be angry with me."

"What! secrets!" exclaimed Lord Rochford; "then I suppose I had better go: but you must tell me first how it is all going on with the poor little darling."

"She is very ill, indeed," answered Amy; "and my aunt is very much frightened about her."

"It is a bad business," said Lord Rochford. "I wonder Mr Harrington ever trusted such a young creature as Miss Morton."

"Oh! indeed," answered Amy; "Miss Morton did not leave her—at least I don't think she did. It was that I wanted to speak about," she added, hardly daring to look in Mr Cunningham's face.

Lord Rochford walked away; and Mr Cunningham, in the kindest manner, begged her not to be frightened, but to tell him at once if he could be of any use. "We are old friends now," he said, with a smile; "and if you take my part, I must take yours in return."

"Miss Morton is going away," said Amy, feeling that her courage would entirely fail her, if she did not enter upon the subject at once.

"Not now," exclaimed Mr Cunningham, in surprise; "not while little Rose is so ill."

"Yes," replied Amy; "the carriage has been ordered, and she is to go this afternoon. My aunt believes," she continued, speaking very quickly, "that Miss Morton has not told all the truth about having left Rose in the field alone; and so she says she must go directly. But Margaret and Miss Cunningham were there too, and I think ——"

"What do you think?" said Mr Cunningham: "had they anything to do with it?"

"I don't know," replied Amy; "but when I spoke to them just now, they did not seem quite to like telling me every thing; and I thought that perhaps if you

were to ask Miss Cunningham, she would not mind talking to you, and then you might be able to find out something which might prevent my aunt from being so displeased; and she might allow Miss Morton to stay till Rose gets better."

"I am not sure that I entirely understand what you mean," said Mr Cunningham. "Let me hear again what you wish me to do."

"If you would go to Miss Cunningham," repeated Amy, "and ask her to tell you the whole story, perhaps you would find out that Miss Morton did not leave Rose quite alone, as my aunt thinks she did. Margaret says they were a great way from her when she fell in; but then they might have been near her before."

"And will they not talk plainly?" said Mr Cunningham, looking very much annoyed.

"They would only say a little," answered Amy; "and then they went away. And I do not think they liked me to ask them any questions."

Mr Cunningham was fully aware of Amy's meaning, though she had endeavoured to express it as gently as possible. He had long and anxiously watched his sister's disposition, and had noticed too often the deceit which she did not hesitate to practise when it suited her purpose, for him to be surprised on the present occasion. If she had had any share in the accident she would certainly be desirous of concealing it; yet the thought was extremely painful: and his countenance, as he walked with hasty steps towards the door, made Amy fear that she had offended him deeply. "I am afraid," she said, "that I have done wrong, but I was very unhappy; and the hour is nearly up, and then Miss Morton will go; and perhaps she will never see little Rose again."

"You have been right—quite right," replied Mr Cunningham. "But I must see Lucy directly: where shall I find her?"

"She is in her bed-room, I believe," said Amy: "she will think me very unkind."

"You need not be afraid," he answered; "no one shall think anything of you but what is right and good. You must not let Miss Morton go till you have seen me again."

The words were quite a reprieve to poor Amy, though she knew how great an offence it would be to keep the carriage waiting; for Mr Cunningham had been so kind to herself, that even if her suspicions were unfounded, and Rose had really been left carelessly, he might perhaps speak to Mrs Harrington, and prevail on her to change her determination. With this idea she was going immediately to Miss Morton to give her the hope of remaining, when Dora stopped her. "Well, Amy," she exclaimed, "what have you done?"

"Nothing," replied Amy; "at least, nothing with Margaret: but I have done something which I hope will be of use; I have spoken to Mr Cunningham."

Dora started. "Oh! Amy, how could you be so bold? If I had been ever so great a favourite, I never could have done such a thing as that."

"I could do any thing for Miss Morton," replied Amy. "But, Dora, do tell me how Rose is."

"Very much the same. Mamma is becoming dreadfully anxious; she can think of nothing else: if she could, I would have made one more effort for poor Emily. I wished we had asked her just now, when we were with her, to tell us every thing just as she told mamma, for I am sure mamma did not half understand it. I did not think of it at the time, for it all seemed to have happened so suddenly, and every thing was so confused."

"Supposing we were to go now," said Amy: "I am sure she must wonder what is become of us."

"I am afraid I cannot," replied Dora; "for mamma

begged me to come back again directly. I was only allowed to leave her because she wished so much to know if there were any signs of papa or Dr Bailey coming down the road. I wish I could hear all you said to Mr Cunningham. But we must not stop now: you had better go to Emily."

"I will beg her to repeat the story, if you think it would be any good," said Amy.

"I am afraid that nothing would make mamma listen to any thing from us now," replied Dora: "we must trust to Mr Cunningham. Lucy would hardly dare be deceitful with him; and I am sure Margaret would not."

"I would give any thing to know what he has been saying since we have been here," observed Amy.

"You will know in a few minutes if it is any thing good," said Dora. "But I wish you would go now, and give poor Emily a little hope: and you may tell her that Rose has not been worse within the last quarter of an hour." And as she said this, Dora walked away, and Amy went to Miss Morton's room.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Mr Cunningham did not find his sister in her room; she had gone down stairs again with Margaret, who could not endure to remain long stationary in one place while there was so much cause for anxiety about her little sister. She fancied that it would be easier to learn what was going on by remaining in the school-room; and though fully resolved to allow every thing to take its course, and not to say any thing in Miss Morton's favour, she was still too uneasy to attend much to her friend's entreaties, that she would not put herself in the way of being again questioned by Amy or Dora.

Miss Cunningham was standing with her back to the door when her brother came into the room, and was much startled when she turned round and perceived him near her; for she saw immediately, from his countenance, that something disagreeable was coming.

"I have been looking for you, Lucy," he said, in a voice rendered even more confused than usual by his eagerness and the irritation of his feelings. "I wanted to speak to you particularly."

"What about?" replied Lucy, with as indifferent a manner as she could assume.

"You may easily guess what," he answered: "this sad accident—you were near the spot—how did it happen?"

"I cannot tell you all," said Lucy. "We were standing near the bridge, and just saw poor little Rose run from the top of the field, and fall in; and then we went to help her."

"But it is impossible," observed Mr Cunningham, "that Miss Morton should have left a child of that age quite alone. Are you sure she did not give you any charge about taking care of her?"

"I suppose she thought," said Margaret, anxious to evade a reply, "that as we were in sight it did not signify."

"But," continued Mr Cunningham, "if Miss Morton left Rose at the top of the field, and you were near the bridge, she could not have considered your being there as any security: in fact, I doubt if she could have seen you; you must have been nearer at first."

"How you puzzle one, George," exclaimed his sister. "How is it possible to remember every thing that happened when we were all so frightened? I am sure I have felt bewildered ever since."

"Very possibly," replied Mr Cunningham, coolly. "But you will have the goodness not to be bewildered now: I must know the whole of this matter. Miss Morton is going away at a moment when it must be most distressing to her feelings, upon a charge of great neglect of duty. And I will find out whether the charge be true or false."

Lucy looked very frightened; she knew her brother's determination of character, and saw that there was no chance of escape, unless she chose to tell an actual falsehood; and this, notwithstanding her propensity to equivocation and deceit, she could not make up her mind to do. Margaret endeavoured to steal away unobserved, but Mr Cunningham prevented her. "You will excuse me; but this is a case in which I must be allowed to have my own way. I must beg you to remain; you may perhaps be able to assist Lucy's memory."

Margaret's colour went and came very quickly, her knees trembled, and her hand shook: but she did not

dare disobey; and seated herself again, with her face turned from Mr Cunningham, and with the secret resolution of not speaking, if there were any possibility of avoiding it.

"Now, Lucy," said Mr Cunningham, again appealing to his sister, "I shall ask you one simple question, and I expect a decided answer. Did Miss Morton leave you in charge of Rose?"

"Really," said Lucy, hesitatingly, "I can't—I don't—you are very cross this afternoon, George, to come and tease us so, when you know how we have been frightened, and how very unhappy Margaret is."

"No one can be more sorry for the cause of her unhappiness than I am," he replied: "and when my question is answered, I will on no account tease either of you again. Perhaps you did not quite understand what I said: I will repeat it. Did Miss Morton leave you in charge of Rose?"

"You are vexing Margaret, I can see," replied Lucy. "I never thought you could be so unkind before. We came here to be quiet and alone."

"This is mere trifling, Lucy," said her brother. "You know full well that it will not answer with me: nothing will shake my determination of knowing the truth; and therefore the best thing you can do is, without any farther equivocation, to tell me plainly what I wish to know."

There was a pause when Mr Cunningham had spoken: neither Lucy nor Margaret saw the least chance of evading the question, yet neither felt inclined to answer it. Mr Cunningham placed himself in front of his sister, looking at her calmly and sternly, and patiently waiting till she chose to reply; whilst she endeavoured to keep her determination of stedfastly gazing out of the window, and taking no notice of him. But it would not do; she stood far too much in awe of him to resist long; and at length, bursting

into a fit of angry tears, she exclaimed—"I wish Miss Morton, and Rose, and all the family, had staid at Wayland all their lives, instead of coming here to make me miserable."

"Then it is true," said Mr Cunningham; "you were left in charge of the poor little girl, and you went away from her; and then, when the accident occurred, you were too cowardly to take the blame upon yourselves, but occasioned great unhappiness to an innocent person, by allowing her to be accused unjustly. Yes, Lucy," he continued, observing that his sister rose hastily from her seat, and was about to leave the room, "you may well be anxious to hide yourself; but you will not be allowed to go till you have made the only reparation in your power. You will confess your fault to Mrs Harrington; I shall let her know instantly the mistake under which she has been labouring."

"Pray, pray don't leave me," cried Lucy, as Margaret tried to escape. "Why am I to bear it all? you know it was quite as much your doing as mine."

But Margaret did not choose to attend: she was willing to be Miss Cunningham's friend when every thing went smoothly, but she saw no reason for putting herself in the way of her mother's anger unnecessarily. And Mr Cunningham, having gained his point, hardly felt justified in interfering any further. Without again speaking to Lucy, he wrote a note to Mrs Harrington, apologising for intruding upon her distress, but begging her to allow him a few moments' conversation on a subject of much consequence. And when the servant returned with the answer, he merely said to his sister, "Mrs Harrington will be here directly; you had better make up your mind to tell the truth in as few words as possible. It will be out of your power to conceal any thing, as Miss Morton's own account will certainly be compared with yours."

Mrs Harrington's mind was now in a very different

state from what it had been when Lucy had last seen her. The moments spent by her little girl's sick-bed had increased her anxiety, and subdued the irritation of her temper. Her feeling against Miss Morton was deeper, but less vehement; and occasionally, as she had listened to the moaning of the suffering child, and heard her repeat Emily's name with a wandering entreaty that she would come to her, her heart had relented, as she had felt inclined, for the sake of poor little Rose, to allow Emily to continue at Emmerton a few days longer. But on a second consideration the idea vanished, and her only wish then was, never again to be compelled to see or speak to a person whose neglect she believed had been the cause of so much wretchedness. Still Mrs Harrington was outwardly much calmer; and her harsh tones sounded as coldly as ever when she asked Mr Cunningham to do her the favour of mentioning his wishes quickly, as she could not be spared from her child's room.

"It is my sister's business rather than mine," he replied. "She has been induced, from fear of your displeasure, to conceal her own share in this most unfortunate accident; and she is now going to confess the truth, in hopes that you will allow Miss Morton to remain."

"It was Margaret," exclaimed Miss Cunningham: "I never should have moved from the gate but for her. I only went to the other side, at first, because it was drier; and then it did not signify: but it was Margaret who begged me to go down to the bridge, and look at the pony."

"And do you mean, then," said Mrs Harrington, "that Miss Morton left Rose with you, and that you went away from her?"

"We only went into the steep field because it was dry," answered Lucy; "and Rose was quite in safety."

"I do not entirely understand you," said Mrs

Harrington. "Perhaps you will have the goodness to explain yourself more clearly."

Miss Cunningham complied with evident reluctance, yet she did not venture to distort any of the facts, knowing that her brother would easily discover the whole truth upon a reference to Miss Morton. She only endeavoured to lay as much of the blame as possible upon Margaret, and to make Mrs Harrington believe that she would have spoken before if she had understood the cause of Miss Morton's sudden departure. The excuse, however, was too weak to succeed: a bitter smile curled Mrs Harrington's lip as she said, —"You need not trouble yourself to give your reasons for what you have done; your brother, I am sure, must be as fully aware of them as I am. Margaret's conduct I shall inquire into immediately. I am afraid," she added, turning to Mr Cunningham, "there is a heavy punishment in store for her thoughtlessness and selfishness. My poor little girl is very ill."

The real feeling which was expressed in these words, and in the tone in which they were uttered, touched Mr Cunningham deeply; and his voice faltered as he replied, "It would be a punishment felt by very many; but we will hope and pray that it may please God to avert it."

"I will counter-order the carriage," said Mrs Harrington, recovering herself, and ringing the bell; "and I will inform Miss Morton of the change."

"Perhaps at the same time," observed Mr Cunningham, "you would allow me to order our own. My father was speaking to me, just now, of the wish you had expressed this morning, that our visit should be prolonged; and doubting if it would be advisable after what has now transpired. Of course we would on no account intrude upon you: my sister's presence, I fear, will never again be any thing but painful."

Mrs Harrington could not contradict his words, and

felt at a loss for a reply; when the entrance of the servant relieved her from the awkwardness. The carriage, which had just come to the door, was remanded; and a summons was sent for Miss Morton.

"You had better prepare for going immediately, Lucy," said her brother. "And if you have any thing further to say to Mrs Harrington, any apology to make for your conduct, or any message to leave for Miss Morton as a proof that you are really sorry for the pain your deceit has occasioned her, you had better speak at once."

Lucy, however, did not speak—at least she did not say what her brother desired; but, muttering, sulkily, that it was very hard she should have all the blame, and Margaret none, without venturing to look at Mrs Harrington, left the room.

Mr Cunningham quickly followed, in no very enviable state of feeling. He saw from Mrs Harrington's manner that she was seriously alarmed for Rose; and his sister's indifference was startling to him. He could not have supposed it possible that she would have been so insensible to the probable consequence of her neglect: for, with a disposition peculiarly free from selfishness himself, he did not understand how soon it blinds us to the sufferings of others, and how quickly it buries, if not entirely destroys, even in very early life, every better feeling of human nature. Miss Cunningham was not entirely cold-hearted: it is a rare thing indeed to find any one who is. But she was from nature and education intensely selfish; and it was this which made her dwell only upon the blame she had incurred herself, when others might have grieved for the misery they had caused their friends.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Mrs Harrington's message was delivered to Miss Morton at the moment when her uneasiness was becoming extreme; and she was endeavouring to make up her mind to go, without waiting for the effect of Mr Cunningham's interview with his sister. The carriage had been announced, and Mr Harrington's well-known dislike to its being kept waiting made her feel it wrong to delay; though Amy, whose hopes of Mr Cunningham's success, and dread lest Emily should never see Rose again, overcame every other consideration, entreated her to wait, if it were only for five minutes, in the certainty that they must soon hear something from him.

"It is only deferring the evil moment," said Emily. "I have been trying to collect resolution to bear it; and I hope I can now. It might be worse an hour hence. The last accounts were more comfortable; and I know your mamma will manage that I should hear again to-night. I wish I could see her; but it will be better not. You must say how I thought of her, and of the kindness she has shown me."

"It cannot signify for once," observed Amy, "if the carriage is kept a few minutes. I am almost sure Mr Cunningham will be able to do something."

"It is not real kindness to tell me so," replied Emily: "I shall only feel it the more difficult to do what is right. Indeed I must go."

"Oh no!" exclaimed Amy, trying to stop her as she moved towards the door, And at that moment Susan's knock was heard. "It is all right now," said

Amy, when the message was repeated: " my aunt never would have sent for you if she had not changed her mind."

Emily thought the same, though she scarcely ventured to hope it; and Amy's anxiety was nearly at an end, when Susan, who guessed her feelings, told her that the carriage had been sent away. Miss Morton did not hear her exclamation of pleasure, or she would perhaps have trembled less on entering the schoolroom; but Mrs Harrington's countenance very soon reassured her. She was evidently aware of having behaved with impatience and injustice, and desirous of making amends, though her tone and manner would have seemed painfully repelling in any other person. Emily, however, thought of nothing but the purport of her words: they were few and chilling; but she acknowledged that she had been wrong in her opinion as to Miss Morton's neglect, and said she was sorry that Margaret and Miss Cunningham had allowed her to remain so long in error. Their conduct was highly culpable—in fact, quite unpardonable; and Margaret should certainly be spoken to most seriously on the subject: but at that moment it was impossible to think of any thing but Rose; and she should be obliged if Miss Morton would go with her to the poor child's room, that they might see if it were possible to take any measure for allaying the fever before Dr Bailey arrived.

Notwithstanding the set formal style of this speech, it was received by Emily with the most sincere gratitude, for she knew that it must have been a great effort for a person of Mrs Harrington's proud temper; and, considering only the intention, she followed her with a sensation of indescribable relief, which, on any other occasion, would have appeared quite incompatible with her great anxiety. Amy was waiting in the passage, and delayed her for one instant to ask if all were right.

The question was scarcely needed, for Emily's change of countenance was a sufficient index to her mind; and Amy, as she heard her whisper, "It is your doing, and I shall never forget it," felt completely satisfied.

She was now at liberty to go to her mother, who she feared might be astonished at her absence. But Mrs Herbert had not long known her return from the Cottage, and was only just beginning to wonder why she did not come to her.

Amy was full of eagerness to tell all that had passed: but her mother's first inquiry was for Rose.

"Your aunt particularly begged me to leave her," she said; "and I found that whilst Miss Morton was there I could not be of any use: but I really cannot remain here. I can see none of the servants; and I do not like constantly to ring, because of giving them additional trouble when there must be so much to be attended to."

"I don't think they are engaged particularly now, mamma," replied Amy. "Poor little Rose is quieter: and my aunt does not know what more to do."

"Perhaps, then," said Mrs Herbert, "she would not object to my being with her. I should have no occasion to exert myself much; and I might be some comfort to Miss Morton at least."

"A little while since," said Amy, "I am sure Miss Morton would have been more glad to see you, mamma, than any one else in the world—she was so very miserable; but she would not let me tell you, because she said it would worry you and make you ill."

"What do you mean?" asked Mrs Herbert: "has any thing been going on in which I could have been of use?"

Amy soon related the whole affair, and concluded by anxiously asking whether her mamma thought she had done wrong in applying to Mr Cunningham.

"No," said Mrs Herbert: "I think, considering

all the circumstances, you were quite right. It would have been a cruel thing for Miss Morton to have been sent away now. But have you seen Mr Cunningham since? and do you know whether he is going?"

"I rather think he is," replied Amy, "for I heard one of the servants saying something about Lord Rochford's carriage, as I crossed the hall; and I hope so, very much, for I should not know what to say if I were to see him again. I could not thank him for having found out that his sister had done wrong; and yet it was very kind of him. But, mamma, do you really think poor little Rose is so ill?"

"I am very much alarmed for her, my dear: she is so young to receive such a shock; and I have often thought her delicate myself, though no one agreed with me."

"What will Miss Morton do?" said Amy.

"She will feel it very bitterly," replied Mrs Herbert. "Rose was her chief earthly comfort: but she will not murmur."

"And all her long life to come," said Amy, "there will be nothing to look to,—nothing that she will care for."

"Yes," replied Mrs Herbert, "there will be things to care for—and there must be, while she has duties to perform: and it is distrusting the love and providence of God to think that he will not give her comfort and peace again. If her mind were different, it might be feared that she required years of suffering to perfect her character: but as it is, we may hope and believe that she will never be entirely destitute even of earthly happiness."

"I cannot bear to think of her," exclaimed Amy, while the tears rushed to her eyes. "It seems so hard—so very hard, that she should suffer. And Rose, too,—oh! mamma, she is so young to die."

"And therefore, my dear, it is the greater mercy

that she should be taken from a sinful world. Do you not remember that beautiful verse in the Bible?—'The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart: and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come.' If death is thus sent as a blessing to the good, surely we may think that it is sent equally in love to the innocent."

"Mamma," replied Amy, as she looked in her mother's face, "you say so; but I am sure it makes you very unhappy."

"I cannot talk about it now," said Mrs Herbert; "it will only unfit me for doing what I can to comfort your aunt and uncle, and Miss Morton. When your papa returns, I shall certainly go and beg them to let me be with them."

"I think," observed Amy, listening at the door, "I can hear a noise down stairs as if some one were just come."

"I wish it may be your uncle and Dr Bailey," said Mrs Herbert.

"No," replied Amy; "it is papa—I am sure it is his voice. He is talking to Bridget; and she will keep him so long."

But Colonel Herbert was not a person to be detained by any one when he did not choose it. He quickly learned the outline of what had happened, and then hurried away to learn more of the details from his wife. Mrs Herbert, however, would not remain long with him. She could not endure the idea of being away from Rose, when every fresh account served only to increase her alarm; and, leaving Amy to answer all his questions, she went to Mrs Harrington with an earnest request to be allowed to stay in the room, even if it were not in her power to be of use.

Mrs Harrington was by this time in a state of such nervousness and excitement, that she scarcely com-

prehended what was said: she knew only that Mr Harrington ought to have returned long before; and that his continued delay might be fatal to the life of her child. Miss Morton did her utmost to soothe her; but her own anxiety was very great. Rose still continued in the same state, tossing from side to side, and occasionally fixing her eyes upon Emily, as she bent over her, with the fixed unnatural gaze, which told, even more plainly than words, that reason had fled.

Dora took the opportunity of her aunt's presence to leave the room. She wished very much to see Margaret, and talk a little to Amy; and felt oppressed and confused by the sight of an illness, which painfully recalled all she had suffered on her brother's account only a few months before. Any active exertion would have been easily borne; but to sit by the side of a sick-bed, perfectly powerless, required a patient, trusting spirit, which as yet Dora was far from possessing: and she watched with astonishment the calm self-composure with which Emily Morton did all that was necessary for Rose, and then turned to Mrs Harrington to suggest a reason for Dr Bailey's delay, or give her some hope that the symptoms were rather more favourable.

Colonel Herbert was listening to Amy with a deep yet painful interest, when Dora knocked at the door. She would have gone away on seeing him, but he would not allow it; and, placing an arm-chair by the fireside, made her sit down, and begged her to stay with Amy just as long as she liked; for he was sure she must want some one to talk to when she was in so much distress. Amy evidently did not quite like her papa to go away; and Dora, vexed at having interrupted their conversation, entreated him so earnestly to stay, that he could not refuse, though he determined not to be a restraint upon them for more than a few minutes.

"Papa knows every thing now," said Amy: "I had just finished telling him when you came in."

"I met Lord Rochford's carriage on the road," observed Colonel Herbert; "and they stopped, and told me what had happened. I am afraid, Dora, your poor mamma must be in a dreadful state of suspense and alarm."

"I think Margaret is more unhappy than any one," said Dora. "She was crying so bitterly when I went to her room just now; and she had fastened her door, and would not let me in at first."

"She will never forgive me for having spoken to Mr Cunningham," said Amy.

"Yes," replied Colonel Herbert; "she will forgive every thing when she can forgive herself."

"Now Lucy is gone," said Dora, "she is left quite alone; and she thinks every one in the house is complaining of her, and that she is the cause of all mamma's misery; and she does not dare go out of her room for fear of meeting her."

"I wish she would let me go to her," said Amy; "I am sure she must think I have been very unkind. But indeed I did not mean to make her so wretched; I only thought of Miss Morton."

"She cares more about poor Rose now than any thing else," replied Dora. "She says it will make her miserable for life if she does not get better. And I know I should feel just the same. It would be so very dreadful to think of having caused such an accident."

"But," said Colonel Herbert, "it certainly seems to me that Margaret's deceit in Miss Morton's case was far worse than her having left Rose."

"Only the consequences may be so much worse," said Dora.

"The consequences of our actions are not in our own power, my dear Dora," answered her uncle.

"If we look to them, we may just as well say that Miss Morton ought to be miserable, or the poor man who drove the cows into the field,—they all had a share in the accident."

"Certainly," said Dora, "when Margaret and I were talking together just now, we traced it all back to Julia Stanley and Mary Warner. It was they who made Lucy so angry. And if it had not been for that, Margaret says she never should have asked her to go out; and then Emily Morton would not have left poor little Rose with them, and the accident would not have happened. How unhappy they would be if they knew all that had occurred from their laughing at Lucy, and saying foolish things."

"It is a great blessing," said Colonel Herbert, "that we are not in general permitted to see the consequences of our actions; if we were, we should be afraid either to move or speak: but I believe God sometimes does show them to us, in order to make us fearful of doing the slightest thing that is wrong. When we have once known all the evils that a hasty word or selfish action may bring upon ourselves or upon others, we shall learn how carefully we ought to walk through life, avoiding, as the Bible says, even the appearance of evil."

"But, papa," said Amy, "if we do not think of the consequences of what we do, how shall we ever be able to tell what is right?"

"Do you not see, my dear child," replied Colonel Herbert, "that we never can tell the consequences of any thing? We do not know what is going to happen the next minute, and therefore we must have some other guide."

"It is very difficult sometimes to find out what is right," said Amy.

"The best way of discovering our duty, my dear," replied her father, "is to have a sincere wish of doing

it. People puzzle themselves because they do not really make up their minds to fulfil their duty, whatever may happen. They wish to escape if they can; and then they begin to think of the consequences, and so they become bewildered, and at last nearly lose their power of discerning right from wrong. You know, Amy, what our Saviour calls 'an honest and true heart:' if we possess that, we have a better guide for our conduct than any which the wisest philosopher could give us."

"I think I wished to do what was right just now, papa," said Amy: "but yet I could not make up my mind about it."

"I do not mean to say," answered Colonel Herbert, "that we shall always be able to decide at once; but I am sure that if we patiently wait and pray to God to assist us, we shall find that something will happen, as was the case with yourself when you could not resolve upon speaking to Mr Cunningham, which will make it quite clear to us where our duty lies; only, generally speaking, persons cannot endure suspense and doubt, and so they act hastily, even with good intentions, and then blame themselves when it is too late."

"What did happen just now?" asked Dora.

Amy hesitated for a reply: she could not repeat the fears that were entertained for Rose; but her father came to her assistance. "One of the servants had seen Miss Morton," he replied, "and told her that your poor little sister was not so well; and the description of Miss Morton's distress decided Amy upon applying to Mr Cunningham."

"I would give all the world," exclaimed Dora, "if Dr Bailey were come; and it would ease Margaret's mind so much too."

"I wish it were possible to comfort her," observed Colonel Herbert; "but I am afraid it would be out of the power of any one at present."

"Oh, if Rose should but get well!" exclaimed Dora, "we shall all be happy again then."

"Yes," replied her uncle: "but do you not see, my dear Dora, that nothing can really make any difference in Margaret's conduct?"

"Indeed, uncle," said Dora, "it would be impossible not to feel differently."

"I will quite allow that," replied Colonel Herbert; "and I am not wishing so much that Margaret should care less about Rose, as that she should care more about Miss Morton. The one fault was far greater than the other; and we must never forget that sorrow for the consequences of our faults is not repentance; it will not keep us from sinning again when the temptation offers. The only sorrow which can really be of service to us is that which makes us shrink from an evil action when it is done in secret, and apparently without having any effect upon others. I mean," he added, seeing Dora look surprised, "that we must learn to dread deceit, and selfishness, and vanity, for their own sake, because they are hateful to God, not because they make us disliked by our fellow-creatures."

Dora could not entirely see the distinction: she thought her uncle harsh in his manner of speaking of Margaret; and Colonel Herbert soon perceived by her silence that she did not enter into what he had been saying: he did not, however, like to pursue the subject any further, for it hardly seemed the moment to discuss questions of right and wrong, when Dora's mind was in a state of so much anxiety; and he therefore contented himself with begging her not to think that he could not feel for Margaret most sincerely, because he wished that she could see her actions in a just point of view. "I am a stranger to her as yet," he said; "but I shall hope soon to show how real an interest I take in her, and in all of you. Even if I were not so nearly connected, I could not forget the kindness

and affection you have shown to Amy, and that s
of her happiest moments have been spent with y
Dora's heart was a little softened by this spe
neither could she easily resist the polished dignit
Colonel Herbert's manner, which gave a peculiar ch
to every expression of feeling. She did not, howe
choose to acknowledge it, and exclaimed, when he
the room, "Your papa is so different from every
else, Amy; he almost frightens me. I wonder
could talk to him as you did this morning."

"I don't feel comfortable always," said A
"especially just at first when I begin; but afterw
I forget every thing but the pleasure of having
home again, and then I can get on quite well."

"I wish Julia Stanley had talked to him a lit
observed Dora; "he would have put her down
lightfully."

"I wanted to ask you a few questions about
and the others," said Amy; "but there has beer
time; and no one has been able to think of comm
things. Perhaps, though, you would rather not
me about them now."

"Yes, I would," replied Dora. "I think it
me good to forget for a few minutes. I sat in
room just now, looking at poor little Rose,
watching mamma's misery, till I felt as if I could
breathe—there was such a weight upon me; an
will come back again presently."

"Don't fancy that," replied Amy; "it may al
right by-and-by."

"I cannot think so," said Dora. "I have o
had a fear about Rose, though I hardly know why;
she was so beautiful and innocent, and every one lo
her so: she seemed born for something better t
living amongst persons who are always doing wr
Do you remember, Amy, the day we went toge
to Stephen's cottage, when he talked so gravely,

said that she had an angel's face, and that it was fitter for heaven than for earth. It gave me a pang to hear him; and I have thought of it so often this afternoon."

"I remember it quite well," said Amy; "and how grave you looked afterwards. But, Dora, would it not make you very happy to know that you never could do wrong any more?"

"Yes. And then Rose has never done any great harm, as other people have, who are older; and besides, she cannot look forward to any thing."

"That is what I feel sometimes," said Amy. "It seems as if there were so many things to be seen in the world, and so much pleasure to come when one is grown up. I can quite understand that old people do not care about dying, or persons like Miss Morton, who have nothing to make them happy; but I cannot feel like them."

"Poor Emily!" sighed Dora; "she will be more unhappy than any one." And then, as if trying to shake off painful thoughts, she added, in a different tone, "But, Amy, you must tell me at once what you wish to know about Julia Stanley, or I shall have no time left. I promised Margaret to go back to her for a few minutes."

"It was nothing particular," said Amy; "only I wanted to hear what time they went away, and whether Mary Warner said any thing more to Miss Cunningham."

"Lucy and Margaret went out almost immediately after you were gone," replied Dora; "so they did not meet again; and I don't think it would have been of any use if they had, for there was nothing really to be said: Mary had done no harm; and I am sure Julia Stanley would have rendered matters ten times worse if an apology had been made in her presence. She tried to make Mary as angry and pert as herself, but it would not do: and at last she quite laughed at her,

and called her a tame-spirited girl, who was not fit to go through the world; and then Hester took Miss Cunningham's part, and said that they neither of them knew how to behave, and she would appeal to me to support her: so you may imagine my walk was not very agreeable; and I was quite glad when we came back to find that the carriage had been ordered, and they were to go directly. They all left messages for you, Amy, excepting Mary, who told me she had seen you. Julia was really kind, and begged me to say how glad she was about your papa's coming home, and that she wanted to have told you so herself; and Hester joined with her, but I don't think she really cared much."

"And Mrs Danvers," said Amy,—"when did she go?"

"Directly after breakfast; because she was afraid of the children being out late. I wish, oh, how I wish she had staid, for then Rose would not have been taken for a walk. They had all left us before one o'clock; and Mr Dornford prevailed on papa to let Frank return with him for a day or two."

"I shall never think of any of them with much pleasure," said Amy; "though I enjoyed some things when they were here very much. I wonder whether they will ever stay with you again."

"I don't know," replied Dora. "Mary Warner may, perhaps, because her home is not very far off; but Mr Stanley intends to live in London soon; so that unless we meet there, I suppose there is not much chance of their ever coming in our way again. But one thing more, Amy, I must tell you: I saw Mr Cunningham and Lucy before they set off. Lucy was very sulky, and would hardly speak; but Mr Cunningham was extremely kind; and I could see how much he felt for us all. He begged particularly to be remembered to you, and said he wished he could have said good-bye to you."

"I think he is the kindest person I ever met with," replied Amy; "but still I am very glad he went away. And if I had seen Miss Cunningham, I cannot think what I should have done."

"Perhaps her brother will not speak of you," said Dora: "but as it is, I don't think she is very fond of you. She looked more sulky than ever when your name was mentioned. And now I think I have given you the history of every one, so I had better go to poor Margaret."

"Margaret will not like to see me, I am sure," observed Amy. "But I wish you could tell her how sorry I am,—I don't mean that you should give her a message; but only if, in talking to her, you could make her think me less unkind."

"She does not know that you had anything to do with the affair," replied Dora.

"But I would much rather she should know," said Amy, looking vexed. "I could never bear her to love me, and yet feel all the time that I had been deceiving her."

"I will tell her if you desire it: I did not like to do it before. But if I were in your place I could not keep such a thing back."

"No," answered Amy; "I do not wish any one to love me when they do not know I have done things to vex them: it would seem as if I were taking what did not belong to me. But, Dora, perhaps you will say to Margaret, now, that I wished her to know it myself, and that I am very, very sorry about it, and that I hope, with all my heart, she will forgive me."

"She would never be angry with you if she felt as I do," said Dora.

"Hark!" exclaimed Amy, interrupting her, "is not that the hall door-bell?"

Dora ran into the gallery to listen, but came back with a disappointed countenance. "It was not the

bell," she said: "but I could see the groom who went with papa riding down the avenue. What can have made him return alone?"

Amy had scarcely time to answer before Dora was gone to make inquiries. They were not satisfactorily answered. Mr Harrington had not found Dr Bailey at home, but hearing that he was only absent on a visit to a patient, about a mile from his own house, he thought it better to follow him himself, and had sent the servant back with a little pencil note, explaining the reason of the further delay. The information, however, in some degree relieved Mrs Harrington's uneasiness, for a thousand vague fears had arisen in her mind; and notwithstanding her alarm for her child, she could now feel comparatively composed.

Rose also was again becoming more tranquil; and her mother began to cheer herself with the hope that even before Dr Bailey's arrival, there might be a considerable change for the better. But in this hope Emily Morton did not participate. Though equally anxious, she watched every symptom with far greater calmness; and, young as she was, had seen too much of illness not to perceive that the change which appeared to be taking place was likely to end fatally, unless Rose possessed a strength of constitution sufficient to enable her to bear up against the excessive weakness with which it was accompanied. The remedies that had already been tried had in a measure allayed the fever; but the poor little girl was evidently suffering from some internal injury; and her low moanings were as distressing to Emily now as her vehemence had been before.

The moments passed wearily by. Colonel Herbert and Amy walked up and down the avenue, although the evening had closed in, listening for the trampling of the horses' feet: Dora remained with her sister; and Mrs Herbert sat in the chamber of the sick child.

forgetful of herself, as she tried to console those whose sorrow was greater than her own. Emily Morton was the first in the house to catch the distant sound: and immediately afterwards Amy's voice was heard at the door, whispering that her uncle and Dr Bailey were just arrived. Emily left the room, thinking that Mrs Harrington might prefer her being absent; and while the physician was deciding upon a case on which it seemed that her own life depended, she paced the gallery quickly with Amy at her side, without uttering a single expression either of hope or fear, and endeavouring to bring her mind into a state of perfect submission to whatever it might be the will of God to appoint.

Much as Emily had loved Rose before, though she had been for months the very sunshine of her existence —the one bright gem which alone gave a charm to her daily life, she had never fully realized how much her happiness depended upon her till that moment; and when at length the door again opened, and Mr Harrington and the physician came into the gallery, all power of utterance seemed denied her, and unconsciously she caught Dr Bailey's arm, and looked in his face, with an expression of such fearful anxiety, that, accustomed as he was to scenes of suffering, it for the moment almost overcame him. But even before he had spoken Emily had learnt the truth from Mr Harrington's countenance. She had never seen the same look of anguish before but on one occasion, when he stood by the death-bed of his eldest son. "I know it," she exclaimed, with the same unnatural hollowness of voice which had startled Amy before: "you need not tell me; I felt there was no hope."

"We will not say there is no hope," replied Dr Bailey, kindly, yet gravely. "She is so young that her strength may rally again."

"It is better to know the worst at once," said Mr Harrington. "But can you indeed do nothing?"

"I fear not," was the reply. "There is apparently some internal mischief. But of course I will do every thing that lies in my power; and I shall hope to return here very early in the morning, when I shall be better able to judge of the case from the effect of the medicines I have ordered."

"Do you think she will know us again?" asked Emily, rousing herself from the first stupor of grief.

"It is probable she may," replied Dr Bailey. "The fever will most probably diminish; and the pain she is suffering may, I think, be soothed by opiates."

"And is it quite impossible that you should remain with us to-night?" inquired Mr Harrington. "I need not say that where the life of my child is at stake no sacrifice would be too great."

"You must not talk of sacrifices," replied Dr Bailey. "No one could look at that sweet child without feeling that to be the means of restoring her would be more than a sufficient recompense for the greatest exertions. If it were not that I have a still more urgent case requiring my presence, nothing would induce me to go. But I have no immediate fear for your poor little girl; there is not likely to be any great change for several hours: and you must remember she may rally after all."

Whilst Dr Bailey was speaking, Amy had brought a chair for Miss Morton, and stood by her side, earnestly desiring to comfort her, yet not daring to do more than show it by her manner. It was a grief so deep that she could not venture to speak of it; and her own tears fell fast, as she remembered what Rose had been, only a few hours before, and thought of the condition to which she was now reduced.

But a few more words passed between Mr Harrington and Dr Bailey; and when they parted, there was a promise given that, if possible, the latter should return to Emmerton by day-break. Mr Harrington

was rather relieved by the idea, and hastened to his wife to give her the same comfort; but he found her in a state which rendered her incapable of receiving it. Her expectations had been so sanguine before Dr Bailey's arrival, and she had hoped so much from the decrease of the fever, that the disappointment was doubly felt, and she now required almost as much attention as Rose. Cold as she generally appeared, her affection for her children was very great; and Rose from her infancy had been her especial delight: and now that she was called suddenly to part from her, at a time when she was still suffering from the loss of her eldest boy, her whole mind seemed to sink under the trial. Emily Morton's love, indeed, was not less; but there was a principle to support her, of which Mrs Harrington knew but little; for she felt only that Rose was dying, and her thoughts could not dwell with comfort upon the world in which she would live again. At this season of distress the blessing of Mrs Herbert's presence was particularly felt. The sight of so much sorrow made her insensible to all pain or fatigue; she seemed to possess a power of thought and feeling for every one; and her natural energy enabled her to decide at once upon what was best to be done.

Dr Bailey's orders for Rose were quickly attended to; Mrs Harrington was conveyed to her own room almost insensible; and a few words of kindness and sympathy were spoken to Emily, which gradually recalled the feeling of resignation to which her mind had been so long tutored, and restored her power of action. Mr Harrington went himself to inform Dora and Margaret of Dr Bailey's opinion, and then stationed himself at the door of the sick chamber, that he might be informed of every change that took place; whilst Amy, after doing her utmost to assist Mrs Herbert, went to her father, who was now left solitary and anxious in the room, which only the evening before had been filled

with company, and resounding with music and merriment. The contrast was indeed strange; and Amy, when thinking of it, could scarcely believe it possible that so much had happened in so short a space of time. It was her first lesson in the changes of life; and it spoke even more plainly than her mother's warnings of the utter insufficiency of wealth to afford any thing like real happiness. At that hour she felt how little comfort her uncle could derive from being possessed of the means of gratifying every passing fancy. He would have sacrificed all, without a thought, to have restored his child to health; but his riches and his luxuries were powerless; and the one only consolation now remaining was that blessing of prayer, which was equally the privilege of the poorest of his neighbours.

CHAPTER XXIX.

MARGARET'S feelings, upon being first told of Dr Bailey's opinion, were bitter beyond expression. She accused herself of having been the cause of all that had happened; and declared that, unless Rose recovered, she should never again know a happy moment: and then, as the burst of sorrow subsided, she endeavoured to find some excuse for her own conduct in that of Miss Cunningham, appealing to Dora to determine whether, if it had not been for her, she should have been induced to leave Rose by herself. Dora tried to console her; but she could not help remembering what Colonel Herbert had said; for she saw that Margaret had no idea how faulty her conduct had been with regard to Miss Morton: so entirely, indeed, had it passed from her mind, that even when told of what Amy had thought it right to do, she took but little notice, merely saying that she had always thought Amy loved to meddle with every thing, and then renewing her self-reproach, and her complaints of Miss Cunningham. For some time she could not be persuaded to leave her room; but, as the hours wore away, she became more tranquil, and at last consented to go to her little sister, though it was with a shrinking reluctance, which proved how much she dreaded to look upon the change of which she had been partly the cause. The effect, however, was at first less painful than might have been expected. The medicines which had been administered had in a great degree lulled the pain, and Rose was now lying in a state of torpor. Margaret gazed on her for some moments in

silence, but without any great apparent distress, until Rose opened her eyes and looked up in her face with perfect unconsciousness; and then her cheek turned pale, and her lip quivered, and, unable to bear the sight, she turned hastily away, and again shut herself up in her own room.

Several hours passed after Dr Bailey's departure, and Rose still continued so quiet, that a faint hope was felt even by Emily Morton that her strength of constitution would enable her to rally from the shock she had received. Mrs Herbert also fancied that she perceived some signs of returning intelligence, and went herself to Mr Harrington to cheer him with the favourable account, and to ask whether he thought it would be expedient to communicate it to Mrs Harrington; but the amendment was so trifling, that he feared the consequences of a second disappointment. She was therefore only told that Rose was more tranquil, and that every thing had been done which Dr Bailey advised; and Mrs Herbert urged the necessity of her taking some rest, if she wished to be of any service in attending upon her child on the following day. At first she strenuously resisted, but her husband's entreaties at length prevailed; and, after some consultation, it was decided that Morris and Emily Morton should watch till the morning, and that Mrs Harrington should have the earliest intelligence if any change took place for the worse. Mr Harrington went to his room, but not to rest, still less to sleep. There were none, indeed, in the house who could obtain more than a few moments of forgetfulness. The slightest sound was listened for with anxiety; but through the greater part of the night all remained still, and nothing but the light which gleamed from the sick chamber would have indicated that any thing unusual had occurred. During this time there was no change to excite either hope or fear; and Emily, as she observed the perfect

repose in which Rose was lying, almost hoped that she slept. The painful expression of a wandering mind had passed away, and but for the irregular breathing and the altered complexion, she could have imagined that her anxiety was a delusion. And yet the thought that Rose might recover did not bring with it entire happiness. In those silent hours of watching, Emily's mind had recovered its usual tone, and she had forced herself to look with steadiness upon the loss she dreaded. For herself, it would be the severing of her dearest earthly tie; but for Rose, it would be an escape from all the dangers of the world to the enjoyment of rest and peace for ever: and as she recurred to the bitter trials of her own life, and the sins and infirmities with which it had been crowded, she felt that to wish that one as yet so innocent should be spared to struggle with the same temptations would be merely a selfish regard to her own feelings, without any reference to considerations of far higher importance.

What Rose might be in after-life no one could dare to say. When she grew up, Emily must leave Emmerton; and, though she could trust and hope that God would guard her through the difficulties of life, she could not but tremble for her. To lose her now, would be to feel that she was gone to happiness: to lose her then, might be to dread lest she should have forgotten the promise of her baptism, and departed from the path of holiness in which she had so earnestly endeavoured to lead her. The very possibility was fearful; and as it flashed upon her mind, Emily went to the window to relieve herself from the oppressive gloom of a sick chamber, by looking upon the heavenly beauty of a cloudless night. All was perfectly still; the long shadows of the trees were motionless upon the lawn, and not even a leaf was stirred by the night breeze. The earth seemed to be at rest; but Emily well knew that the peace of that hour would quickly

pass away, and that the morning might bring with it rain and storms to deface all that now appeared so fair. It was not upon the beauty of this world that her heart could dwell with comfort at such a moment; but she could look upon the bright stars which glittered above her head, and rejoice to think that there were homes where sorrow had never entered: and then she prayed, not that Rose might be restored to her, but that God would guard her whether in life or death, and grant to herself a perfect submission to his will.

Emily was still standing at the window when a slight sound startled her. She fancied that Rose had spoken; but Morris, who was at the further end of the room, had not noticed it. Again, however, her name was repeated distinctly; and when she went to the bed-side, she saw, by the light of the lamp, that Rose had opened her eyes, and was gazing around, apparently bewildered with the new situation in which she found herself. At the first instant, Emily's heart bounded with joy, but another glance made it sink in despair. Rose had recovered her senses; but a change had passed over her countenance, which told that her hours were numbered. It was an expression that Emily had too often watched to be deceived; and anxiously beckoning to Morris, she determined upon sending immediately to Mr Harrington. Morris, however, was leaving the room, and did not observe her; and afraid of startling Mrs Harrington by ringing the bell, she thought it best to wait a few minutes for her return, and endeavour in the mean time to soothe and tranquillize the suffering child. "I am near you," she said, softly. "You know, my darling, that I never leave you."

"I thought you were gone," said Rose. "Why do you let me stay here?"

"Because it is better for you to be here than in any other place. You will not care, if I am with you."

"It is all strange," said Rose. "When will you take me away?"

"If you are better, you may go by-and-by," answered Emily, hardly able to articulate the words; "but you are too ill now."

Rose tried to lift her little hand to her head, but she had not strength for the effort. "It pains me so," she said.

"But it is God who sends you the pain," replied Emily; "and he loves you so much, you will try and bear it."

"Will he make me die?" asked Rose, fixing her dark eyes earnestly upon Emily's face.

For a moment Emily could not answer; and then, recovering herself, she said, "If God should make you die, my darling, he will take you to heaven; and you will live with him, and with Jesus Christ, and the holy angels. You will not be afraid?"

"Must I go alone?" continued Rose. "You always said you would be with me everywhere."

"It is not God's will," replied Emily. "I must not go with you now, but I will pray that I may follow you by-and-by. And he will watch over you, and love you much more than I can; and you will be so happy, so very happy, you will never wish to return back again."

"Then you will come soon, and mamma, and papa, and all," murmured Rose, whilst her head sank, and her eyes closed.

Emily, in alarm, was about to ring the bell, when she again opened them. "Don't go," she said, feebly clasping Emily's hand. "It is all dark. Why will not mamma come?"

"She will be here directly, I hope," replied Emily. "But it is not really dark; and God is near, and the angels, though you cannot see them."

A second time Rose closed her eyes, and appeared

to be repeating something to herself. Emily gently withdrew her hand, and going to the other side of the room, she rang to summon Morris. Rose looked at her as she stood again by her side, but scarcely seemed to know her, till Emily placed her hand on hers; and then, with an effort, she said, "Am I naughty? Indeed I cannot remember it."

"Remember what?" asked Emily, anxiously endeavouring to catch the reply.

"Say it, say it," murmured the dying child.

Emily bent still closer, and heard the words—"Our Father which art in heaven," though they were so faint as hardly to be intelligible. "I will say it for you," she replied, summoning all her self-command to subdue the agony of her feelings; and, kneeling down, she repeated, calmly and distinctly, the holy prayer which Rose had been taught in her earliest infancy, and which was now recurring to her mind, to bless and soothe her death-bed.

Whilst Emily was yet speaking, Mrs Harrington, followed by her husband, who had been alarmed at the sound of the bell, entered the room; but Rose did not appear to notice them. A momentary strength had been granted her, and, with a clear though feeble voice, she followed the prayer to the end; and then, stretching out her little hand, she said, "Mamma, it is bright now. They are come to take me." And with a faint smile, as she half repeated Emily's name, her head once more sank upon the pillow, and the innocent spirit was at rest.

CHAPTER XXX.

It was happy for Emily Morton that the attention which Mrs Harrington's situation demanded, when the fact of her loss forced itself upon her mind, obliged her in some degree to forget the misery of her own feelings. So much was required to be done, that she had no time to realize the vast blank which that one moment had made in her existence; and her chief anxiety now was to prevent Mrs Herbert from being disturbed. This, however, was impossible. She had not, indeed, heard the bell; but she soon learnt all that had happened, and went directly to Mrs Harrington's room to entreat that Emily would allow her to take her place, and at least lie down for a few hours herself, even if sleep were, as she feared, out of the question. But Emily's only support was in exertion. To have been left alone in her own chamber, with every thing around to remind her of the treasure which had been taken from her, would have been a trial so great that she could not suffer herself to dwell upon it. "I must stay," she said: "it is all I can do; and I do not need rest."

Mrs Herbert looked at her anxiously. "You do not know what you need just now, my dear: but perhaps you are right: only," she added, as she kissed Emily's burning forehead, and observed the trembling of her limbs, "I have felt lately almost as if you were my eldest child: and you must allow me a mother's authority."

Emily could not answer: but Mrs Herbert's affection, even in that hour of bitterness, relieved the oppressive sense of desolation which had before

weighed her spirit to the earth; and when again left to herself, she was able to dwell with greater composure upon the scene through which she had just passed, and felt truly thankful that her prayers had been heard, and that strength had been given her to support it.

The morning had dawned before Mrs Harrington was sufficiently recovered to allow of her being left; and while Emily was still lingering, unable to summon resolution to go to her own room, a gentle knock was heard at the door, and Amy's voice asked permission to enter. "Mamma sent me," she said, as calmly as her agitation would allow. "She wishes you so much to go to bed; and we have been getting my room ready for you, that you may be near us, if you want any thing. I am to be in mamma's sitting-room, so that no one shall go to you unless you like it."

"You had better go," observed Mrs Harrington, faintly; "you must require rest more than any one. Pray do not stay with me."

Emily hesitated. She thought that, if the effort she dreaded were made at once, the most painful trial would be over. But Amy's pleading look could not be resisted. "It has been my only comfort the last half hour," she continued, "to try and make all nice for you; and poor Dora has been helping me: and Margaret sent her love to you, only she cannot bear to see any one."

"You must go," insisted Mrs Harrington. "If Morris is left with me, I shall not require any one else." And Emily did not wait any longer, for she was beginning to suffer from the effects of all she had undergone.

The room had been so prepared by Amy's thoughtfulness, that it almost looked as if Emily had inhabited it for weeks; and little as she then cared for personal comfort, she yet felt unspeakably relieved by these

tokens of affection: for a child's love had lately been so associated with every thought and feeling, that without it there was an aching void in her heart which nothing else could fill.

Her rest, if such it could be called, was short and broken; but in her half-waking intervals, Amy's face came before her with its expression of peaceful innocence, as if to remind her that something was still left in the world to which her affections might cling: and when she arose to the full consciousness of sorrow, her first comfort was the thought that it was God who had ordained her trial, and the second that he had remembered her in her distress, by giving her such friends as she felt Mrs Herbert and Amy to be.

The day passed slowly on, but Emily had neither the power nor the inclination to leave her chamber. She was completely exhausted by the night's fatigue; and Mrs Herbert entreated her on no account to make any exertion till her strength had been in some degree recruited. There was not much indeed required, for Mrs Harrington had been considerably refreshed by a few hours of sleep, but her spirit was entirely crushed by the blow. She seldom spoke, or paid any attention to what was going on, but sat gazing upon vacancy, or walking up and down the room, unmindful of every effort that was made to rouse her. It was now that Dora's energy and principle were fully called into action. The selfishness which she had sometimes previously shown had been the result rather of education than disposition; and she had lately struggled so much against it, that, at a time when every feeling of sympathy and affection was awakened, it seemed entirely to disappear. She attended upon her mother, and talked to her father, and comforted Margaret, without apparently once consulting her own wishes, though there were moments when the recollection of Rose, or the sight of some book or plaything which

had belonged to her, brought such a pang to her heart, that she longed to rush away and give vent to the misery of her feelings alone.

Mrs Herbert would probably have suffered much from her exertions if it had not been for Dora's assistance; but she was able in consequence to spend the afternoon in her own room: and however she might sympathise in the grief of her brother and his family, there was a happiness in the knowledge that her husband was near, which nothing could entirely destroy. Her chief anxiety was for Emily Morton. She knew that the first bitterness of sorrow would in time be diminished, and that even Mrs Harrington would probably soon recover from its present overpowering effects; but to Emily the change it would cause must be lasting. There was but little prospect of her continuing at Emmerton, now that her principal occupation was taken from her; and Mrs Herbert shrunk from the thought of her being sent again amongst strangers, to meet perhaps with still greater scorn and neglect than she had yet experienced. She had no home, and but few friends, and might, therefore, be compelled to go immediately into another situation, with the recollection of little Rose weighing upon her spirit, and adding tenfold bitterness to the trials she would probably be called on to encounter.

Mrs Herbert was thinking upon this subject, and endeavouring to form some plan for Emily's comfort, when her husband entered. He had been talking with Mr Harrington, and had left him, he hoped, more tranquil and resigned.

"I am not so much afraid for him," said Mrs Herbert, "as for my sister. A person of her disposition can seldom entirely recover from a sudden shock of this nature."

"Perhaps," he replied, "it may not be intended that she should. One hardly likes to think of the

reason for which afflictions are sent to others, because one may judge so wrongly; yet a deep, quiet, lasting grief will sometimes, I am sure, win back our hearts to God when every thing else has failed."

"Poor Charlotte!" said Mrs Herbert: "it is a bitter discipline. And I never see other people suffer without thinking that I may require it next myself."

"Have you seen Miss Morton lately?" asked Colonel Herbert. "I am afraid the change this will bring upon her will be greater than upon any one, as far as outward circumstances go."

"Amy has been keeping watch upon her all day, and told me just now she thought that she was trying to sleep again, so I did not like to disturb her; and indeed I have only seen her twice since the morning, and then only for a few minutes, for I saw she required rest and solitude more than any thing else."

"She will scarcely remain here now," said Colonel Herbert. "Her chief employment and interest will be gone. And I suppose she would not be happy even if Mrs Harrington wished her to continue."

"Charlotte will not wish it. She told me a short time since, that her principal reason for desiring to keep Miss Morton was on account of little Rose, as Dora and Margaret did not like having her in the house, and she felt herself that the position was an awkward one. She did not choose her to be a companion; and she was not old enough to have any authority."

"And what will become of her?" said Colonel Herbert.

"She will go into another situation as soon as possible; but the difficulty will be to find one that will suit her."

"It will be a miserable life for her, I fear," he continued. "Some people seem born to struggle against the hardships of the world; but she is so

very gentle that it appears as if the smallest unkindness would completely crush her."

"You do not know her," replied Mrs Herbert. "She can never be crushed by any thing, not even by the grief which she is now enduring. Her principles are far too high."

Colonel Herbert paced the room thoughtfully for several minutes; and then suddenly stopping, he said, "Amy is very fond of Miss Morton, I think."

"Yes; and the acquaintance has been of infinite service already. Amy is very quick at discerning character, and notices every thing; and I can constantly see how the example of Miss Morton's patience and goodness has strengthened her own right feelings. I quite dread to think of what she will suffer when they are compelled to part."

"Are you quite sure that parting is necessary?" said Colonel Herbert.

"Only as you are quite sure yourself. Miss Morton will not wish to stay, and my sister will not wish to keep her; and of course in such a case she must go."

"Supposing—remember I am not expressing any wish upon the subject,—but supposing it were suggested to Miss Morton to return with us to the Cottage, and take your place as Amy's governess: would it meet your wishes; and do you think she would like it?"

"Would you really agree to such a plan?" exclaimed Mrs Herbert. "It crossed my own mind once, but I thought it would not please you; and I could not bear to propose any thing which it might give you pain to refuse."

"Why should you imagine it would not please me?"

"Because it might interfere with your notions of domestic comfort to have a stranger in the house. And then you cannot feel for Miss Morton as I do."

"But I can feel for her because you do. And with regard to my notions of domestic comfort, I should consider them of very minor importance, even if Miss Morton were not a person to excite such deep interest, when compared with the advantage her assistance would be to you in Amy's education, and the pleasure it would be to Amy to have such a companion. The first thing that gave me the idea was the knowledge that you required more relaxation than you were likely to give yourself if you considered that Amy's instruction depended entirely on your own energy."

"I do not think we should repent taking such a step," said Mrs Herbert. "My own feeling for Emily is so sincere, that I would make great sacrifices for her comfort if they did not involve yours."

"I do not see why they should: though, even if they did, I hope I should not hesitate. By arranging for Miss Morton to return with us, we may be the means of giving her peace, and even happiness, for several years at least. But in fact I do not feel that it will be any sacrifice now that I know you would like it."

"It would be a very great relief to my mind," said Mrs Herbert. "If you had seen her look of misery last night, you would have felt that it was impossible to rest satisfied till something had been done for her."

"It will not do to decide upon it hastily, though," observed Colonel Herbert. "Situated as we are, having known her family, and having a personal interest in herself, whatever we decided on doing we should be obliged to continue,—I mean that we could not allow her to leave us merely on the ground of its not suiting our convenience that she should remain. It would be cruel, after giving her the idea that we are really her friends, to throw her again upon the mercy of strangers."

"Still," said Mrs Herbert, "I am not really inclined to hesitate: my feelings are decidedly in favour of the plan; though for that very reason I should wish to consider all the possible objections in their strongest light."

"There will be no occasion to decide at once," said Colonel Herbert. "Miss Morton will scarcely be in a state to think of any thing for the next few days; and by that time we shall be better able to judge whether there is any serious obstacle in the way—any thing that involves a sacrifice of what is right, which in fact is all that is really to be considered."

"People would laugh," said Mrs Herbert, "at the idea of its being possible to act wrongly in taking an orphan girl into your family with the earnest wish of making her happy."

"Very likely they would: but I have seen enough of life to have discovered that a hasty kindness is often quite as injurious as a hasty unkindness. Mere feeling, however good, should never be allowed entirely to guide our actions, especially where the happiness of another person is so materially concerned as in the present case."

"I do not well see how it could lead us wrong now," replied Mrs Herbert.

"It might induce us to decide without considering the sacrifices which will be required of us: and then when the time came for making them we should be vexed and disappointed, and should probably show it, and so destroy poor Miss Morton's comfort, or perhaps force her to leave us; whereas, if we well weigh them beforehand, we shall be prepared, and they will come as a matter of course."

"I believe you are right; and yet my first impulse, when you mentioned the subject, was to go at once and name it to Emily: of course, I felt in a moment it would be very absurd, if not really wrong; but it is

so hard to know that suffering exists, and not make some effort to relieve it."

"Yes," replied Colonel Herbert; "and it is so hard to make up our minds that suffering is good for those we love: but we must do it now; we must bear to wait patiently till Miss Morton has formed her own plans, though we know how much it will cost her to do it, and also to see every one about us unhappy for many weeks, if not months to come: no human power can at present give them consolation."

"It is but a sad welcome for you," said Mrs Herbert, smiling through her tears as she looked in her husband's face: "but I can be deeply thankful that the trial did not come sooner—I could not have borne it then."

"We might have been too happy without it," he replied. "I half dreaded that something might happen when I went with Amy to the Cottage. To see you looking as you did on that morning, so much more like your former self than I could possibly have expected, and to discover in every word she uttered how entirely my fondest wishes for her had been realized, was greater happiness than it is usually permitted us to enjoy for any length of time."

"It is strange now," said Mrs Herbert, "to remember the unclouded pleasure I then felt; it is like endeavouring to realize the beauty of a summer's day when we are in the midst of winter. But there are some who seem to have had no summer to their lives —Miss Morton, for instance."

"Her summer may be to come, even on earth," replied Colonel Herbert; "at least, if it should be arranged for her to be with us, I think we shall agree in striving that it may be so: and if it should be otherwise ordered, she is hardly a person to grieve for the few wintry hours of this life, when she can look forward to the long summer's day beyond it."

"It would be a great blessing," said Mrs Herbert, "to feel that we had been the means of giving her comfort and relief; yet I fully see the necessity of considering the subject well. And one thing we must be careful about is, the manner in which it is first mentioned to my brother and Charlotte. They would not be likely to object, and yet they might be annoyed if Emily proposed herself to leave them, and then came to us immediately afterwards."

"Perhaps it would be best," observed Colonel Herbert, "to find out their ideas first; and if they are what we fancy, to suggest our wishes, and gain their approbation before it is named to Miss Morton."

"Always remembering that we well weigh all the difficulties," said Mrs Herbert. "I see your mind runs on just as fast as mine; you speak as if you had no doubt what your decision would be."

"Perhaps I have not; however, it is as well to be reminded of prudence: so, for the next day or two, we will forget that we have any inclinations, and look only to the objections."

The entrance of Amy interrupted the conversation, which was not again renewed till the evening; and by that time Mrs Herbert's feelings were still more interested in carrying the plan into execution. She had spent nearly an hour with Miss Morton, and had found her more composed than she could have imagined possible; but it was evident, from many little expressions, that Emily fully contemplated the necessity of her removal. She spoke much of Mrs Herbert's kindness, and said that the remembrance of it would be carried with her as one of her greatest consolations, wherever it might please God to place her; and with timid hesitation she asked whether Amy might be allowed at times to write to her. "Perhaps," she said, "your slight knowledge of me scarcely warrants my making the request: but it is hard to part so

suddenly from all that has given pleasure to life; and my heart will still cling to Emmerton, and to those who have rendered it so dear to me, even in a few short months."

Mrs Herbert longed to say that she trusted the parting might be unnecessary: but she contented herself with assuring Emily that Amy should write to her frequently, if they were separated; and expressing a general hope that she might always remain in the neighbourhood.

"I am afraid," replied Emily, "that it would hardly be for my good. I feel now as if to linger so near, to be so constantly reminded of lost blessings, would unfit me for the duties of life. I must act; and perhaps the greater my difficulties and my loneliness, the better it may be for me in the end. Even now I have forced myself to consider and decide upon the future, because I know that to sit alone and dwell upon the past would destroy all my powers of exertion."

"But to see us occasionally," said Mrs Herbert, "would surely be a comfort to you."

"In time it would," replied Emily, "but not now. To be within reach of you, and yet to be separated, as I must be by circumstances, would probably make me repine even more than I fear I am inclined to do at present. And I am trying," she added, while her pale lips quivered, and the tears rushed to her eyes, "to learn the lesson which it is the will of God to teach me. I know how quickly my heart will fix itself upon earthly objects."

"But you must not think, my dear," replied Mrs Herbert, "that it is God's will that we should live without affection. Why should he have bestowed such feelings upon us if they were not intended to be exercised? If we give the first place to him, he will never forbid us to give the second to our fellow-creatures."

"I am afraid," said Emily, faintly. "I have thought before that I could give up all for him, and yet, when he required it, I have shrunk from the sacrifice; and so it is now. I am not resigned as I ought to be; and I must never again put myself within reach of the temptation of loving an earthly being too well."

"You are speaking, my love, under the influence of an overstrained feeling," answered Mrs Herbert. "I know you would not change what has happened if the power were granted you at this instant; you would not bring back that sweet child to the sufferings of a sinful world, even if it were to give yourself years of happiness."

"No, no!" exclaimed Emily, eagerly. "I can and I do thank God that she is safe with him—not in words only, but from the very bottom of my heart; and yet I may be afraid—it has always been so. Those whom I have loved the best have ever been taken from me the first."

"Only we may not presume to decide why," said Mrs Herbert. "It may have been for their good, quite as much as for your warning. And even now, if the loss of a darling child should be the means of bringing those whose happiness was wrapt up in her nearer to God, you would be the first to acknowledge the greatness of the blessing, and to see that the object of the trial might be principally their benefit. I do not mean to say," she added, observing that Emily continued silent, "that we are not all in danger of allowing our hearts to rest upon our earthly treasures; I am sure, indeed, it is one of our greatest temptations: but still we must not always think we have done so when they are taken from us; and, especially, we must not shut ourselves up in silent misery, and refuse the alleviations which God mercifully grants us."

"Perhaps," said Emily, "I could be more resigned,

if I did not at times fancy that I had been the cause of every thing. If I had never left her, many moments of self-reproach would be spared me. Not that I give way to the idea, because I believe it is false: I was doing what I knew to be my duty in going to the cottage; and the event was in the hands of God: but yet the notion haunts me; and even when I turn away from it, it still remains a load on my heart."

"And it will remain there, my dear, till the first misery of your feelings has worn off, and you can see things in a truer light. It is impossible to argue against it; or rather, no arguments which any person can use will entirely satisfy you; but you must, indeed, force yourself to turn away from it, or it will grow into a certainty, and then the whole energy of your mind will be destroyed. If we once allow ourselves to dwell too much upon the consequences, even of our slightest actions, we shall be quite unfitted for the duties of life."

"Then you do not think I was wrong?" said Emily.

"No, indeed I do not. You went on an errand of kindness, where your services were really required, and you left that dear child, as you believed, in a place of safety with those who were certainly quite old enough to have taken care of her during the few minutes of your absence. Consider what your feelings would have been if you had neglected to go to the cottage, and fatal consequences had been the result. You might have reproached yourself then, perhaps, justly; but you can have no cause for it now. If any one has reason to be distressed it is poor Margaret; and I am afraid she is suffering very much."

"Have you seen her?" asked Emily.

"No," replied Mrs Herbert; "but Dora tells me she cannot comfort her at all. I have sent several messages, and hope, by-and-by, she will let me go to her."

"Will you say something from me," said Emily. "I hardly know what,—but only let her feel that I think of her."

"I wish it were possible to convince her how wrongly she has acted towards you," answered Mrs Herbert. "I fear that what she is suffering now will have but little real influence on her character. It is mere feeling, and will pass away; for she will soon discover that she has exaggerated her negligence, and then she will care but little about it."

"I am very sorry for her," said Emily; "and I could not bear to think that she was made more miserable now on my account."

"But it would be for her good, my dear: and if I attempt to comfort her by proving that she has over-estimated one fault, I shall certainly endeavour to make her sorry for having thought so little of the other. It will be useless to attempt it by-and-by; but now Dora says she really feels for you, and therefore there may be some hope."

"You must not let her think that I remember it," replied Emily. "I wish she could know how entirely I have forgiven it."

"I am not sure that I do wish it just now," replied Mrs Herbert. "To be forgiven before we have acknowledged our offences makes us think too lightly of them. When Margaret can see how utterly selfish her conduct was, and grieve heartily for it, although no evil consequences have followed, then it will be time to talk of forgiveness. And now, my dear, I must leave you, but Amy shall come to you whenever you wish it."

"Shall I ever thank you enough?" said Emily.

"Do not talk of thanks," interrupted Mrs Herbert; "or, if you will, you must listen to all I have to say of your kindness to Amy."

The substance of this conversation was repeated to

Colonel Herbert in the evening: and as there was now no doubt of Miss Morton's intentions, the only thing that required to be decided was the practicability of her residence at the Cottage. Colonel Herbert insisted strongly upon every objection, feeling in his own mind how much his inclinations led him the contrary way; and having been the first to propose the plan, he was the more anxious that Mrs Herbert should not afterwards see cause to repent it. The expense, the responsibility, the interruption to their own privacy, were all brought forward; but Mrs Herbert overruled every thing; and after an hour's earnest conversation, it was finally determined that the subject should be named to Mr and Mrs Harrington as soon as they had heard of Emily's intentions. "And then," said Colonel Herbert, with a smile of heartfelt pleasure, "if Miss Morton will consent, we will see whether the quiet of the Cottage, with you for a companion, and Amy for a pupil, will not in some degree restore her to happiness."

"If it should please God to grant it," replied Mrs Herbert, "I believe it will be through Amy's means. I can see, even now, how she turns to her for comfort. She half smiled this afternoon when Amy came into the room, and then checked herself, as if afraid to allow her thoughts to dwell upon her."

"Who would not find comfort in Amy?" said Colonel Herbert. "I have often tried to fancy what she would be like; but I could not have expected to find her so entirely simple and sincere, with a mind in many respects so far beyond her age."

"It has been a great relief to me to observe how little she has been altered by the change of her life since she has been so much with her cousins," answered Mrs Herbert. "It was my principal fear at first; but she has had a much greater influence upon them than they have had upon her."

"I suspect," replied her husband, "that we are not

at all aware of the real strength of principle in the mind of a child who has always endeavoured to do right. Children injure themselves for their whole lives by indulging in what are called trifling faults,—a little vanity, or a little selfishness, or a hastiness of temper. If they could only be made to see the infinite importance of subduing these feelings early, they would grow up with confirmed habits of goodness, which, by the blessing of God, would never leave them, however they might be tempted in after-life."

"We will hope that it may be so with Amy," said Mrs Herbert. "Certainly she has begun betimes; and I think she will lead her cousins to follow her example."

"Dora interests me very much," observed Colonel Herbert; "but Margaret I have scarcely spoken to. Have you seen her lately?"

"No; but she promises to let me go to her the first thing to-morrow. She dreads seeing her mother; and I rather think she will be glad to have me to intercede for her."

"She need not be afraid; while Mrs Harrington remains in her present state, she will not be likely to notice any thing."

"To-morrow," said Mrs Herbert, "I shall endeavour to persuade my sister to go and look once more upon that darling child. It will be a great trial, but I think it may rouse her; and her countenance is now so exquisitely peaceful and beautiful, that I should hope it might go far towards reconciling her to her loss."

"The worst trial is yet to come, I fear," said Colonel Herbert. "There is something still to rest upon whilst the outward form is left us, even when the spirit is fled."

"I do not think that I quite agree with you. When every thing is gone that belonged to this world, we are able to feel more truly that the spirit may still be with us. Perhaps the separation between ourselves and

little Rose may be far slighter than we accustom ourselves to imagine."

"It may be so," said Colonel Herbert, thoughtfully, "though the Bible does not give us any certainty upon the subject."

"It does not forbid us to think so; and at times it has been an inexpressible comfort to me to feel that those whom I have loved might still be near, though I could not see them; and I have always felt it more after they were taken from my sight, and I could no longer look upon them with the intense longing that they might return to be what they once were."

"Whether true or not, the idea is an innocent one," said Colonel Herbert: "I wish sincerely that it could be a comfort to your poor sister."

"I think it not impossible," said Mrs Herbert, "that by-and-by Charlotte will consent to see Mr Walton. You know he has been acquainted with her from her childhood; and I am sure she has a very great respect for him: and, as a clergyman, he could say so many things which no one else would."

"I rather doubt it," replied her husband. "She is so little accustomed to be unreserved, according to your account, that I can hardly imagine she would allow any one to speak plainly, much less to comfort her."

"A month ago the case would have been very different," said Mrs Herbert; "but this grief, I trust and believe, will have a very great effect. Even Edward's death was not felt as much—at least it did not appear so when she first arrived. I am not, however, going to talk to you any longer, for I promised Amy, before she went to bed, that I would go to Miss Morton, the last thing, to see that she was comfortable."

"Amy seemed worn out when she wished me good night," said Colonel Herbert; "her pale looks made me quite anxious."

"She has had a very trying day; and then, real

sorrow is so new to her, and she has been endeavouring so much to comfort every one, and suffering so much at times herself (for she was very fond of little Rose), that it is not strange she should look pale."

"I must go and see if she is asleep," said Colonel Herbert, as he stole softly into the adjoining room.

Mrs Herbert followed, though almost inclined to find fault with him for running the risk of awakening her.

But Amy's repose was too deep to be disturbed even by her father's kiss. There was a tear on her cheek which showed what her last thought had been: but sleep had restored the peacefulness of an innocent mind: and Colonel Herbert, as he looked at her with delight, prayed that it might never forsake her.

Mrs Herbert's conversation with Margaret, the following day, was more satisfactory than she had anticipated. At first, indeed, Margaret refused to listen to any consolation. She declared that she had been the sole cause of the accident; that her mother must consider her so; and that it would be impossible ever again to know a happy moment. But when her aunt, although fully allowing her negligence and selfishness, pointed out how many other circumstances had combined to bring about the event, without which her fault, however great, would probably have produced no important consequences to any one but herself, Margaret became calmer; and Mrs Herbert's fear then was, lest she should consider herself perfectly free from blame. "I do not mean, my dear," she said, "that you have no reason to reproach yourself; for selfishness and neglect must always be serious offences in the eye of God: but what I wish you to feel is, that if you have acted in the same manner on other occasions, you have been equally guilty in his sight, though no one may have known it but yourself."

"Every one is selfish," said Margaret: "I never thought it was very wicked before."

"Every one is selfish, naturally," replied Mrs Herbert: "but we are sent into the world to conquer our nature; and many persons are enabled to do it almost entirely. You will not call Miss Morton selfish?"

"No," said Margaret, "I don't think she is; but she has been so unhappy always, that I can never fancy she has had the same inclinations as other people —I mean that she does not care for things in the same way; and so it is not much trouble to her to give them up."

"Yes," observed Mrs Herbert, "she has had a great deal of suffering in her short life; and I doubt whether any trial has been greater than the present."

"I was afraid she would be very miserable," said Margaret. "Dora has told me how ill she looks; and I am so sorry for her."

There was a slight hesitation in Margaret's manner, as if she wished to escape from the subject; but Mrs Herbert was not inclined to permit it to drop. "I am sure you feel for her now, my dear," she said; "but you could hardly have done so when you would have allowed her to be sent away under a false impression, and at a time when, of all others, it must have been most distressing."

The colour rushed to Margaret's cheek, but she answered quickly, "I did not know what would happen then; and, besides, she did not go."

"But for what reason?" inquired Mrs Herbert: "not because you spoke for her willingly. If you had known how much she suffered for a whole hour, whilst obliged to make preparations, and fully believing that she must go, I think you would be sorry for your conduct. She thought then, what we know now would have been the case, that she never would see little Rose again."

"Was she really so miserable?" said Margaret.

"Indeed I did not intend to make her so: and I should never have concealed any thing if it had not been for Lucy Cunningham."

"Miss Cunningham will, I hope, one day see how great her fault was; but, my dear Margaret, her actions cannot alter yours. God will not admit it as an excuse, that others have led us into evil, for we must each be judged for ourselves."

"Does Emily Morton think much about it now?" said Margaret.

"No," replied her aunt; "she is so far from feeling any thing like unkindness, that I am certain she would make any sacrifice to do you good and make you happy. But, my dear child, why will you always turn your mind to what other people think and feel? It can make no difference to you."

"I don't know," replied Margaret; "but it always seems that things are worse when they are thought much of."

"But why?" continued Mrs Herbert. "It does not alter our conduct in the eye of God. We may think of it now, and it may appear to us of consequence; but you know, my love, that there must come a time when it will be of no use to us to have borne a good character in the world, or even to have been loved and admired by our friends, unless we have been also really good in our own hearts."

Margaret turned rather pale, but made no reply; and Mrs Herbert went on. "We do not know how soon the moment may arrive," she said; "and God sends us such warnings as we have had now to remind us of it. It is a great mercy that we may look upon that dear child, and feel perfectly happy in the belief that she is now safe, and in the keeping of her Saviour; but it might have been very different if the summons had been sent to any of us who are older."

"But," said Margaret, "I fancied it was only

grown-up people who could be so very wicked. I am only thirteen, and I have never been confirmed."

"But you have been baptized," replied Mrs Herbert. "Before you could even know the difference between good and evil, God gave you his Holy Spirit to guide you in the right way; and then he placed you in a happy home, with kind parents, and you were taught to read, and taken to church, and kept out of the reach of the temptations of the world. Why should it be less wicked to do wrong when we are young, and have so many blessings and so much instruction, than when we are old and exposed to every kind of evil?"

"My faults are only little ones," said Margaret.

"Your faults are the greatest you can commit, my love; because you have been so educated that you would be ashamed to be guilty of greater ones: and we may be quite sure, that whoever wilfully indulges in a trifling fault when not tempted to do any thing worse, would equally indulge a greater one if the inducement were to be put before him. If, situated as you are, you will not struggle against vanity, or selfishness, or deceit, or ill temper, you would not struggle against theft or falsehood, if you were the child of a poor man."

"But I cannot really be so wicked," said Margaret.

"Yes, indeed you can," replied her aunt. "When God requires of us the account of our lives, we shall have to confess our advantages as well as our offences; and if we commit what people in general call little sins, when our advantages have been great, we must be as wicked as persons who commit greater sins with fewer advantages."

"I do not think," said Margaret, "that I have been taught as much as Amy."

"That is not the question, my dear. The real thing to ask ourselves is, whether we have made the best

use of the instruction we have had; not whether we have had less than others. And one blessing—the first and greatest of all—is given to each of us alike at our baptism; for we are told, in the service which is then used, that God is pleased at that time to regenerate us with his Holy Spirit, and if we chose to follow his guidance we should constantly be kept in the right way."

"I have heard Amy talk in that manner," said Margaret; "but indeed, aunt Herbert, I never understood what she meant."

"Will you tell me, my dear, whether you have ever wished to do right?"

"Oh! yes, very often; only it is so much trouble always to think about it."

"And have you not often admired people whom you saw conquering their evil dispositions, and now and then tried to imitate them, and really felt pleasure in doing it?"

"Yes," replied Margaret, "sometimes."

"All these better feelings," continued Mrs Herbert, "were not your own by nature; they were the work of that better spirit of which I have been speaking: and if you had prayed to God to keep them in your heart, and had endeavoured to act from them, you would have found them becoming stronger and stronger every day; and then, instead of being inclined to vanity and selfishness, you would be humble, and gentle, and self-denying: and though you might often do wrong—because no one in this world can ever entirely get rid of his evil nature—yet you would be very sorry for it; and God, for the sake of your blessed Saviour, would forgive you, when you prayed to him, and he would make you every day holier and happier; he would cause all the troubles of the world to appear light to you; and when you had lived here as long as he knew that it was necessary for your good, he would take you to heaven."

"And will it never be so now?" exclaimed Margaret, touched at last by her aunt's words.

"Yes," said Mrs Herbert, "if you will begin at once: but, indeed, my love, there must be no delay. If you are really sorry for having offended God, there can be no doubt of his forgiveness; but it must always be asked in our Saviour's name. It is only for his sake that we have any thing granted us; and the blessings bestowed at our baptism would never have been ours if he had not died to purchase them."

"I think, aunt Herbert," said Margaret, with earnestness, "that I should never have done wrong things if I had always had you to talk to me."

"Indeed, my love, you would. It is not any human power that can keep us from sin. But you are very young; and if you were to begin at once, praying to God to assist you, and really trying to please him in every thing, you might, in time, become as good as those saints and holy people of whom we read in the Bible."

"No, never!" exclaimed Margaret: "it would be quite impossible."

"They were but human beings," replied Mrs Herbert; "and some of them had not even the same advantages that we have. It requires nothing but real sincerity and trust in God."

"I should like to be as good as they were," said Margaret, "if ——" and here she paused.

"If you could be so without any trouble. But, my dear Margaret, consider what your condition will be at the end of your life, if you continue in this state of mind. How will you feel when you look back upon perhaps a long life, and know that it has been entirely wasted, that you have never really tried to serve God, and that you will probably never go to heaven, because you would not take the trouble?"

"It cannot be necessary to be so very good," said Margaret.

"It is quite necessary to *try* to be," answered Mrs Herbert. "God will never accept any thing but our whole hearts. You must remember our Saviour's words, 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.' Certainly this must mean that we are to be what you call *very good*."

"But," said Margaret, "I thought no one could be good enough to deserve to go to heaven."

"No, indeed, they cannot. But supposing, Margaret, that a great prince were to come to Emmerton and offer to adopt you as his child, and were to promise that, if you would do every thing he wished, he would in time take you to his kingdom, and give you riches and honours beyond all that you could possibly imagine; do you not see that although you never could have merited such kindness, though it would be a perfectly free gift on his part, yet that, if you refused to obey, you would justly deserve to lose it?"

Margaret assented, but she did not seem entirely to understand what was intended; and Mrs Herbert continued: "This is exactly the case with ourselves, my dear. God gives us all the promise of heaven, for the sake of our Saviour, when we are baptized; but he also requires that we should obey him; and therefore, if we neglect to do so, the consequences must be our own eternal misery."

"I don't mean," said Margaret, "that I would not try to be good at all; but that I don't think it can be necessary to be like the saints and people who shut themselves up, and never saw any one."

Mrs Herbert half smiled as she replied: "Certainly God does not require that we should all live exactly the same lives as the persons you mention—He does not command us all to leave our homes and go to deserts; but it is possible to have the same tempers and dispositions as the saints, though we may live in our own families."

"How can we set about being so good?" asked Margaret.

"First of all," replied her aunt, "we must pray to God to give us the will; and when we have that, half our difficulty will be over. It is seldom really hard to us to do what we earnestly desire; even things which seemed quite impossible have been accomplished by a real earnestness of purpose. There is a story told of a man whose father from extravagance had brought his family to great poverty, and who, when he became of age, instead of being possessed of large estates, was absolutely penniless. He was standing one day upon the top of a very high hill, looking over a vast extent of country that had belonged to his ancestors, and which, but for his father's folly, would have been his, when the idea entered his mind that it would be possible by his own exertions to recover all that had been lost. From that moment he resolved that he would never rest till he had achieved his wishes. He worked by night and by day, he gave himself no rest and no amusement; and at length he succeeded, and the estate was his. And though the end of the story is a very sad one, and shows us the sin and folly of setting our hearts on earthly objects,—for we are told that the poor man became from habit a miser as soon as he gained his end,—yet we may learn from it how much is in the power of persons who are really and sincerely in earnest."

"I think I could have felt like that man," said Margaret; "but I should never care so much about being good."

"You would if you could once see how beautiful goodness is," replied her aunt: "if an angel were to be always at your side, you would long to resemble him."

"Oh! yes," said Margaret; "but that is not possible; and every one I see is much the same as I am, only Amy and Miss Morton perhaps are different."

"But you can read your Bible," answered Mrs Herbert; "and you can see there how holy, and merciful, and gentle our Saviour was. His perfect purity is set before us to excite our longings to obtain it, as the estates of that poor man were set before him. It is the image of that holiness which we should have possessed if Adam had never sinned; and if we have but equal resolution, we may have equal success; not, indeed, entirely in this world, because we still must carry about with us an evil nature, but in a far greater degree than we are at all apt to imagine."

"Did you ever know any one who was so very good?" asked Margaret.

"Yes," replied Mrs Herbert; "and I have watched by their death-beds, and witnessed their peace and happiness in the midst of the most severe sufferings. I think, Margaret, if you had ever seen a real Christian die, you would long to be like them."

"Should I?" said Margaret, thoughtfully. "I never saw any one die yet: but poor Edward was always good; and they said he was quite happy."

"Yes," replied her aunt; "and if he were happy then, when lying on a sick-bed, how much more happy must he be now! I know you would wish to go to him."

"And Rose," exclaimed Margaret, bursting into tears. "Oh, aunt Herbert, do you think I shall ever see her again?"

"I am sure you will, my dear child, if you will only pray to God to make you good, and holy, and fit for the home to which he has taken her. Will you begin at once, and never neglect your prayers, and try with all your heart to attend to them, and not allow your thoughts to wander? and will you recollect how very many wrong things you have done, and ask him to forgive you for your Saviour's sake? and then will you endeavour, in every little trifling thing, to give up your own will, and think only of what is right?"

"I will try," answered Margaret.

"If you try," said Mrs Herbert, "not trusting to yourself at all, but praying to God constantly to help you, and give you his Holy Spirit, you may be quite sure of succeeding. Only you must remember that it is absolutely necessary to try *very much*, and not give up the attempt in despair because you find it difficult at first, and are constantly falling back to your old habits; and especially you must not think it sufficient to say your prayers only in the morning and evening; but you must pray to God at all times, and in all places, whenever you are in any danger of yielding to temptation. If you had prayed, I do not think you would have acted as you did towards Miss Morton; you would have seen the cruelty of wilfully adding to her anxiety; and you would have been frightened at the thought of being deceitful."

"I think, now, it was very wicked," said Margaret, sighing deeply; "but can I do any thing to make up for it?"

"You cannot do any thing to make amends to God," answered Mrs Herbert. "When we have once sinned, no future goodness can wipe out the stain; all that we can do is to trust that he will forgive us for our Saviour's sake: but we can, in a certain degree, make amends to our fellow-creatures; and the right thing for you now will be to acknowledge to Miss Morton, when she is able to see you, how very great your fault has been, and then to show, by every means in your power, that you are anxious to consult her happiness."

"And will she forgive me, do you think?" asked Margaret.

"Why should you doubt it?" replied her aunt. "You have never known her any thing but affectionate, and kind, and forgetful of herself. I am sure *she* will forgive, because she will only hear your words,

and see your outward actions; but, my dear Margaret, it will be infinitely more important that you should be forgiven by God, and he will look at the heart."

"Indeed, indeed, I am sorry," exclaimed Margaret. "I do not think I shall ever do such things again."

"I do most earnestly trust that you will not," said Mrs Herbert. "God only knows the effect which the faults of our childhood have upon our whole lives. You will not think, my love, because I have spoken seriously, that I have not been sorry for all you have suffered."

"I like to hear what you say, aunt Herbert," replied Margaret; "but some people I cannot endure, and I never listen to them."

"You must try and listen to every one who wishes to do you good, my dear. And now that we have talked together once, I hope we shall do so often; and whenever you are in any difficulty in which I can help you, you must remember that I am one of your nearest relations, and therefore, of course, I shall love and take an interest in you."

"And will you ask mamma to forgive me?" said Margaret. "I am more afraid of her anger than of any other person's."

"She is not in a state to think of any thing now," replied Mrs Herbert; "but I will certainly speak to her when I see she is able to listen: and I trust you will remember what I said about Miss Morton."

Margaret promised that she would think of it often, and begged to see her whenever she felt equal to it; and Mrs Herbert, after kissing her affectionately, left her with a hope that the effects of the conversation might be lasting.

CHAPTER XXXI.

SADLY and wearily the hours lingered on till the day that had been fixed for the funeral of the innocent child, who had ever been the loveliest and most cherished of the family at Emmerton. It was a time of bitter trial to all; even the servants sighed deeply as they missed the young voice which had once sounded so gaily through the house, and felt that the low rooms and the long winding passages were more gloomy, and the old pictures and curiously fashioned furniture more strange and distasteful to them, when they were no longer brightened by the sunny smile with which little Rose had never failed to greet them. There was an unnatural oppression upon every heart; and few felt it more than Amy: she had never before been a witness of real sorrow, and it was like entering upon a new and painful state of existence; for every one appeared altered; Frank, especially, who had returned from Mr Dornford's the day after the death of his little sister, was completely altered; his spirits were entirely subdued; and his only satisfaction seemed to be in wandering over the house, and collecting every thing that had belonged to Rose, but without any other object than that of looking at and sighing over them. Amy longed to comfort him, but she did not know what to say, for she was herself sharing in his grief; and there was a gloom over her feelings which few other events could have produced.

At her own request, she had been taken by her mother to look at her little cousin as she lay in her coffin; and although some who had felt more of this world's sorrow might have gazed upon her with

calmness, and envied a rest so peaceful, Amy could see only that a change, far beyond her comprehension, had passed over her, which made even the heavenly beauty of her features appear awful. There was the same fair open forehead, the same long silken eye-lashes, almost the same sweet smile upon the lips, which she had often admired when Rose was sleeping; but there was also the fixed immovable expression which only death can give: and when she kissed the pale marble cheek, and shrank away, alarmed at the icy coldness of its touch, it seemed impossible to believe that a form so still should ever have been gifted with life, and still more impossible to realize that she must herself one day be like it.

Mrs Herbert said nothing at first, knowing that words could scarcely add to the lesson which such a sight must bring; and Amy felt as if the sound of her own voice would have been as irreverent in that chamber as in the midst of the services of the church. Long and earnestly she gazed upon the fair, motionless image of little Rose; and then, when she had once more kissed her for the last time, Mrs Herbert gently said, "Amy, shall we pray that our lives may be as innocent, and our deaths as peaceful?" and, kneeling down, she repeated the prayer appointed by the church to be used at the burial of the dead, to console and warn the living. The impression of those moments was never effaced from Amy's mind; and when in after years she looked back with gratitude upon the early release of Rose, the remembrance of her calm face often came before her, as an earnest of the perfect peace which she trusted might one day be granted to herself: even then, when the first feeling of awe had subsided, it was a relief that she had seen her; for the thought of death was no longer as dreadful as it had been, and she was able to talk freely to her mother, and tell her of many difficulties

and fears which had often crossed her mind before, but which there had never seemed a fitting opportunity to mention. Her only real comfort, indeed, during these melancholy days, was in being with her father and mother; for there was something in Miss Morton's manner which distressed and pained her. She was as kind and affectionate as ever, but she did not appear as anxious to have Amy with her as might have been expected. Sometimes, even after having expressed a wish that she should remain with her, she would suddenly stop in the midst of her conversation, and continue silent for several minutes, and perhaps make some excuse in order to send her away; and although this was always done in the most considerate manner, yet Amy did not fail to notice it; and her heart became more heavy as she thought that possibly, after all, Emily did not really care for her very much, and that now little Rose was gone she would never love any one again.

Mrs Herbert understood the reason of this change of manner, but it could not be explained to Amy. She saw that Emily, under the belief of being soon compelled to leave Emmerton, was afraid of making Amy too necessary to her happiness. She was desirous of learning to live without any great objects of affection, fearing that she might rest on them rather than on God; but though such a wish might be natural after the loss of so many whom she had loved, Mrs Herbert knew that it would not be likely to continue, when her mind returned to its natural state. She would then see that it is God's will that we should have parents, and children, and friends to love; and that if we have been grateful for such treasures, and given the first place in our hearts to him while we possessed them, he will often, when one is taken from us, in mercy grant us another to supply its place; and

she would be able to acknowledge how great a blessing it was that she had learned to love Amy before she had been called to part from Rose.

As yet, however, Emily could feel nothing of this. She was indeed resigned, and could spend hours in looking upon her darling Rose, and thinking of her great happiness, and praying that God would make her fit to dwell with her again; but the thought that she had loved her too well was still predominant; and when her heart turned to Amy, and she was conscious how much happiness might still be enjoyed on earth, she feared to dwell upon the idea, and tried to believe that it would be possible to live without having more than a common regard and interest for all who had been kind to her.

The endeavour, however, did not succeed. Amy's winning manner, and thoughtful attention, and warm affection, were irresistible; every hour brought some proof of her love, and every hour Emily became more and more aware how great would be the pain of leaving Emmerton. Yet, believing that it must be endured, she resolved upon delaying the trial only till she had taken the last long farewell of little Rose, and then to lose no time in making arrangements for her departure. But for Mrs Herbert's presence she would have hesitated at leaving Mrs Harrington whilst so ill; but the exertion which was now so much required had rather roused Mrs Herbert, and given her increased strength and energy, than overpowered her; and Emily felt that her own health must suffer, if she were to continue much longer with so great a pressure upon her mind.

The only friend with whom she could reside till another situation was obtained was her former governess; for the aunt who had been the means of placing her with Mrs Harrington was living abroad: and when once her determination was fixed, she lost

no time in writing to claim the fulfilment of the promise of receiving her, and to beg that her friend would exert herself to find some family where she might be admitted as a governess, for the position she held at Emmerton it would be impossible to occupy again. The letter was written and sent, yet Emily could not summon courage to mention it to Mrs Herbert. The shadow of comfort seemed still left whilst her determination remained secret in her own mind—at least no one spoke of her departure openly, although it was certain that Mrs Herbert must really know that it was intended, from the manner in which it had frequently been implied in their conversations. Dora came to her frequently, and Margaret sent a request that she might speak to her soon; but Emily dreaded and avoided an interview which must recall so much that was painful: and once when they met in Mrs Harrington's room, though her manner showed how entirely she had forgiven her, yet both felt relieved upon Margaret's being called away immediately afterwards, so as to afford no opportunity for mentioning the subject. It was the evening on which she was to look upon Rose for the last time, and all her resolution was required to enable her to bear the trial: but strength was granted to her then as it had been before; and when it was over, she found a comfort which nothing earthly could have afforded, in praying that God would enable her to give herself up wholly to his service, and take her to himself when her heart had been made meet for his presence.

CHAPTER XXXII.

It was a calm and sunny morning on whic
Rose was carried to her grave, and with it c
feeling of hope and peace to some of the fa
Emmerton, for it was the promise of the spri
the dreariness of winter; and those who had
tomed themselves to read the truths of religion
silent language of nature could not but view it
type of that morning of the Resurrection—the
time of eternity—when they might trust to
again the treasure from which they were now
to part for a season.

Many of the cottagers were assembled to wa
melancholy train as it wound through the villa
Rose had been a favourite with all, and the
been heavy hearts and sorrowing faces when
first known that she would never visit them
and by a few amongst them, also, the bright
the morning was welcomed with satisfactio
although, to careless minds, the gay sunshine a
but a mockery on a day of so much sadness, th
were more chastened by affliction felt that it
well with the beauty and innocence of a chi
had been taken to happiness before she had ta
sorrow. Several, to show their respect for M
rington, followed the procession to the churc
amongst them old Stephen, notwithstanding
and infirmities, placed himself the foremost.
borne the intelligence of the accident, and its
quences, with tolerable composure, after the firs
was past; for he was an old man, he said, and

be but a very few years, perhaps not one, before he trusted he should see her sweet little face again. It might be hard for those who were young to see others taken away, but 'twas very different for the old. He had had a warning lately; and perhaps the next time the bell tolled it might be for him.

Yet, notwithstanding his outward calmness, Stephen felt deeply in his heart; he was anxious and restless, longing to be able to move, that he might go to Emmerton and get permission to look once more upon his little pet; and at last, when dissuaded from attempting it, he declared that nothing should prevent him from attending at her funeral, if it were only as a mark of his duty to the family.

The exertion was greater than in prudence he should have made: but Stephen had seldom been ruled even by those whom he called his masters; and he kept to his determination, and slowly and with difficulty walked to the church. It was nearly filled; and Mr Walton, as he looked upon the sorrowing faces which surrounded him, felt that his task was a difficult one: but his thoughts turned from Rose lying in her coffin to Rose as she really was—an angel in heaven, and the weight passed from his heart, and he was enabled firmly and unfalteringly to go through the service. Mr Harrington's face was of a deadly paleness, though he remained perfectly calm till the moment when the body of his darling child was lowered to its resting place in the tomb of her ancestors: but then his fortitude forsook him: and when the earth fell with a dull heavy sound upon the coffin, he covered his face with his hands, and leant against the wall for support, vainly endeavouring to conceal his grief.

There were few present who did not participate in it; and when he left the church many glances of sympathy were cast on him by persons with whose names even he was unacquainted: but Stephen could not be

contented with looks; forgetting the years that had elapsed since he had held him in his arms, and taught him to guide his pony, and conscious only of the affection which he felt for the family, he stopped him as he passed the churchyard gate, and seizing both his hands, exclaimed—"'Tis a sad day for us all, sir, and there's none but will feel for you; only we would not have her back again, for she was too good for this world."

"Thank you, thank you, Stephen," said Mr Harrington, returning the pressure warmly; "we will talk another day, but not now."

"No, not now," replied Stephen; "only I couldn't help letting your honour see that I thought of you. I must go home now;" adding to himself, "the Colonel, I suppose, will hardly remember me."

"The Colonel will remember you, though, Stephen," said Colonel Herbert, taking his hand. "It would be a hard thing to come back to England, and forget one's oldest and best friends. But I shall see you soon, I hope, in your own cottage, when we are all better and happier."

"I don't like my cottage as I did," replied Stephen. "I shall often think it was the cause of it all,—not but what it's wrong, though; for God's will was the cause, and his will must be done."

"Yes," said Colonel Herbert; "and we shall all learn, I hope, to be resigned."

"In time, sir,—there's nothing like time and good thoughts. And you will come and see me then, sir, and bring young madam with you, and Miss Amy. How her little face brightened when she talked to me of your coming home! We none of us thought then what was going to happen just afterwards."

"I must not stay now, Stephen," said Colonel Herbert; "Mr Harrington is already standing by the carriage: but we will talk about Amy another time."

"And the young lady, sir,—Miss Morton,—I should

like just to know about her; they say she takes on sadly."

"She is better," replied Colonel Herbert. "Of course it was a dreadful shock to her."

"Ah! yes; they were always together," said Stephen. "Nobody dreamt of their being parted so soon: but they will meet,—we shall all meet again."

"May God grant it!" said Colonel Herbert, as he shook the old steward warmly by the hand, and then, hastily walking away, he joined Mr Harrington.

On his return home, Colonel Herbert went immediately to his wife to inquire for Mrs Harrington and Emily. The former he found had been but slightly aroused from her apathy, even when purposely told what was passing; but Emily was better than Mrs Herbert had supposed possible. The worst suffering had been over on the preceding evening, and she was now able to converse tranquilly, and even again to allude to her future prospects. This, however, arose from a restless anxiety that her plans should be finally fixed. She longed to speak to Mr Harrington, and decide at once upon leaving Emmerton, feeling that her mind would never really be calm till this had been done; and she inquired eagerly of Mrs Herbert, when she thought it would be possible for him to allow her a few moments' conversation. "I know it cannot be to-day," she said; "it would be cruel to ask it: but I cannot rest satisfied till I have seen him."

"I am not sure that it might not be to-day, my dear," replied Mrs Herbert. "If you have any thing on your mind, he would be most anxious to relieve you."

"It is on my mind, heavily," said Emily; "but I would not for the world he should be troubled with my affairs when he has so much to oppress him."

"If it is any thing in which he can be of use, perhaps it may interest and please him," answered Mrs Herbert.

"It is nothing of that kind," said Emily, resolving with great difficulty to mention her intentions openly. "I wish to tell him that I must leave Emmerton. I daresay he would name the subject to me if I did not speak first."

"Will you let us talk to him, my dear? It might save you pain; and we might be able, together, to form some plan for your future happiness. You will trust us, I think, to arrange for you."

"Oh!" exclaimed Emily, "if I do not trust you, whom have I on earth to rest upon? Will you really speak about it as soon as you can? Indeed, I must leave this place soon."

"You may depend upon my not delaying one moment longer than is necessary," said Mrs Herbert: "perhaps this afternoon he may be able to listen."

"And may I have Amy with me till then?" asked Emily; and then checking herself, she added, "but perhaps it will be better not, she will be happier with you."

"No, indeed, my dear, she will not. You cannot give her a greater pleasure, especially if she can feel that it is any comfort to you."

"It is only too great a comfort," said Emily; "but to-day,—it may be nearly the last time."

"And therefore she shall come to you directly. She is walking in the garden at present; for she has been very unhappy, and could not fix her attention to any thing in the house."

"I think I should like to walk too," said Emily. "I must be with the family, and go out again now: and when I am with her, I can bear every thing better; and I must tell her myself that I am going."

"Not to-day," replied Mrs Herbert. "Wait till we have spoken to my brother; and then, perhaps, we may be able to give her a little consolation, for she will feel dreadfully."

Emily knew that it would have been a relief to have mentioned the subject at once; but she assented instantly to Mrs Herbert's wishes, unwilling to give a moment's unnecessary pain to any one, especially to Amy. The restriction prevented her from finding as much satisfaction in her walk as she might otherwise have done; but to Amy it brought feelings more approaching to pleasure than any she had experienced for the last week; for it seemed like the restoration of the days when Emily was always delighted with her society. "I thought perhaps you would come out," she said, "at least in the afternoon; for I am sure you will never feel better while you sit alone in the house."

"It is like a spring day," said Emily. "Who could imagine we were now in the beginning of January?"

"It does not seem like a spring day, though," said Amy, sadly. "I never thought before that sunshine could be so melancholy."

"It will be cheerful to you again, soon. When you go back to the Cottage, with your papa and mamma, you will feel just as you used to do."

"No," said Amy; "nothing will seem as it used to be while you are unhappy."

"I am not going to be miserable," answered Emily, endeavouring to smile. "I know there is not really any cause for it. My darling Rose is far happier than we can imagine; and whilst there are so many duties to be attended to, I hope I shall never sit down idly to repine at the will of God."

"Rose must be happy," exclaimed Amy. "I thought just now I should like to be her."

"We should all like it," said Emily, "if we could only see her as she now is. Yet I believe it is really a great blessing that we do not know more clearly what heaven is like; for if we did, we should sometimes be scarcely able to endure our life here, even when it is the most blest."

"I wish I could know, though," replied Amy; "it would make me so happy to think of going there."

"But then you must remember," said Emily, "that if we had once seen the beauty of heaven we should have no pleasure comparatively upon earth. There are a great many things we enjoy now, which are very innocent and good, and help us to bear up against sorrow; but they would be of no use to us if we could contrast with them the glories of heaven. This bright sunshine, for instance, and the lawn, and the evergreens, and the water, and all that beautiful country beyond, would seem nothing if we could know how much more beautiful the world is to which we hope to be taken when we die."

"I see that," replied Amy; "because I remember, after I had been at Rochford Park, the Cottage seemed quite changed, and not half as pretty as it was before; yet it was not really altered: but I do not think I should have cared so much if I had thought that I should ever live there."

"You will not care again," said Emily, "if you will learn to look upon all beautiful things as the types or images of the treasures of heaven; for no one will desire very much to possess an imperfect picture of any object when he is soon to enjoy the reality. I can understand your feeling, though, entirely; and Rochford Park, I have heard, is very lovely."

"But the people who live there are not lovely," said Amy; "only Mr Cunningham, I like. As for Miss Cunningham, I am afraid I shall dislike her more than ever now."

"You must try not," replied Emily. "She might have been very different with better education; and we might have been like her, if our temptations had been as great."

"Not you," said Amy; "I am sure it is impossible."

"Nothing of the kind is impossible, dearest," re-

plied Emily. "We might all have been like the worst persons that ever lived if we had not received such great advantages; and even now, God will not consider us better than others if we do not profit by them. There are many of us who bear a very good character in the world, and yet must appear hateful in the sight of God."

"I think that is papa just come out of the house," exclaimed Amy.

Emily stopped and trembled. "I do not think I can speak to him now," she said faintly. "Will you come with me into another walk?"

"The one leading to the lake is the most private," said Amy; "only there is not so much sunshine there."

Emily did not reply, but moved quickly away; and a few minutes afterwards Mr Harrington and his sister joined Colonel Herbert on the terrace. They walked for some time almost in silence; and Amy, as she watched them, could not help wishing that her mamma might see Miss Morton, and come to her, for it would be a pleasure to both of them: and it did not seem that she was doing any good in being with her uncle. After a time, however, something was said which apparently interested Mr Harrington; for he listened attentively while Colonel Herbert spoke, and then answered him with greater animation than he had before shown. Amy had a full opportunity for observing all this, as Emily had become suddenly silent; she also was looking at the party on the terrace, and was evidently thinking only of them. The conversation lasted for a considerable time; and Amy, fearing that Miss Morton would be fatigued, begged her to go in: but she answered, rather hurriedly, that she would much rather not; and Amy was not inclined to press the matter, for the unusually mild air and the brightness of the weather had seldom been so refreshing to her.

Sometimes, as she watched her father, she thought

the conversation must have some reference to Emily, for he looked frequently towards her; and Mrs Herbert's smile, as they once unexpectedly met at the angle of the terrace, made her hope that the subject might be an agreeable one. She did not, however, dwell much upon the idea, having never understood that it was likely for any change to take place in Emily's situation; but just as she was about again to propose that they should go in, Colonel Herbert left Mr Harrington, and, coming towards them, told Amy that she had better walk with her mamma, as he wished to speak to Miss Morton a few minutes alone. "I will not detain you long," he added, turning to Emily; "for I am sure you must be tired: perhaps you would rather rest yourself first?"

"Oh! no," exclaimed Emily; "I am not in the least tired; and I would much rather hear every thing now."

"You will, perhaps, scarcely imagine the subject I wish to mention," said Colonel Herbert, as he walked by her side; "but you have said that you would give us the privilege of old friends, and allow us to name your wishes to Mr Harrington: and though I am so little known to you, I hope, when you have heard my reasons, you will not think me intrusive in wishing to speak of them to yourself, personally. If your memory could carry you back as far as mine, I think you would understand why I can never consider you a stranger."

"Indeed, I can remember," said Emily: and her voice faltered. "They were my happiest days, and every person connected with them must always be remembered by me, particularly one who was so well acquainted with my family, and so kind to them."

"Then we will not be strangers," said Colonel Herbert, "but old friends who have a mutual interest in each other's welfare. If you will promise to think of me in that light, I shall have less hesitation in asking a favour of you."

"Of me!" exclaimed Emily, with surprise; "you cannot doubt my willingness to grant any thing you may require: but it seems impossible that I should be able to do any thing for you."

"I understand," replied Colonel Herbert, "that it is your wish now to leave Emmerton: and Mr Harrington agrees in thinking that it may perhaps be better; but he is very unwilling that you should go at once amongst strangers, with whom you can have no sympathy; and the idea of it has made him extremely uncomfortable, for he feels with Mrs Herbert and myself, that from our early acquaintance we are in a great degree your guardians and protectors, and bound to consult your happiness."

"You are very, very kind," said Emily; "but I doubt if you will be able to think of any thing better for me in the end."

"Will you try the plan we wish to propose?" said Colonel Herbert. "If it should not conduce to your happiness, we should be the first to wish that it might be altered."

"I will do any thing that is thought right," replied Emily.

"Then," said Colonel Herbert, "will you consent to return with us to the Cottage, and take Amy for your pupil?"

Emily was silent; and for an instant Colonel Herbert feared that some objection might exist in her mind for which he was not prepared: but when he looked at her countenance, he saw that she was endeavouring to answer him calmly. Twice she tried to speak, but her words were choked; and at last, giving way entirely, she burst into tears. Colonel Herbert felt that his presence must be painful to her; and merely saying that he would wait for an answer till she had had more time for consideration, he left her, and she was immediately afterwards joined by Mrs Herbert.

"I am afraid you have been startled, my dear," she said; "Colonel Herbert insisted upon speaking to you himself; but men never know how to manage these things well."

"Oh! indeed," said Emily, "he has only been too kind; but it cannot really be true: you cannot mean that I shall not be obliged to go away from you?"

"It must depend entirely upon your own choice," replied Mrs Herbert. "If you can be happy with us, and will consent to take charge of Amy, you will ease me of a burthen which is too much for my health, and give us all most heartfelt pleasure."

"But Mr Harrington,"—said Emily; feeling as if there must be some objection to a plan which promised so many blessings at a moment when she was almost overwhelmed with sorrow.

"My brother feels with us entirely: it will be a real relief to him to know that you are happy, or at least in the way of becoming so; for we can only hope to make you tranquil and comfortable at first. And now I shall not let you stay here any longer, but you must go to your room, and I will send Amy to you. We thought that, perhaps, you would like to name the subject to her yourself."

Emily spent the few moments that elapsed before Amy's knock was heard at her door in endeavouring to realize the mercy thus granted her, and to feel grateful to God, who had bestowed it. Though almost confused by the suddenness of the idea, yet her first thought had been of him; and if in the time of sorrow she had prayed earnestly to be devoted to his service, in thought, and word, and deed, still more earnestly did she now pray that no earthly blessings might ever lead her heart from him.

Amy's countenance was sad when she entered. She had been talking to Dora, whose spirits were so much depressed that it was difficult to console her.

Amy had seen comparatively little of her during the preceding week, for she had been in constant attendance upon her mother, or endeavouring to cheer Margaret: but the latter did not now require so much sympathy: she was quiet and sorrowful, but the first excitement of feeling was over; and her aunt's conversation had in a great measure satisfied her mind as to her own share in the accident. Dora had, therefore, more time to give to her own reflections; and they were very painful. Every thing around her was melancholy; and even her mother's abstraction and indifference were scarcely so distressing to witness as her father's silent suffering, and Frank's mournful face: while the thought of Emily Morton was almost worse than either; for Dora felt that she might have been a comfort to her now, if she had only been less unkind before. It gave her a pang to know that Amy was admitted to Emily's room at all times, though she had only been acquainted with her for a few months, while her own visits were merely occasional; it would have been far more natural and right that Emily should look to her as a companion: and as she thought this, Dora's memory recalled all her past neglect and selfishness, and the bitterness of self-reproach added tenfold to her other sorrows. Amy heard it all, but could say little in reply. She knew that Dora had often acted very wrongly, and that now she was justly suffering for it; but she also felt quite certain that Emily Morton did not for a moment think of it.

Dora, however, was not satisfied with this assurance,—she could not be, till she had spoken to Emily herself. "I cannot bear," she said, "only to be allowed to go into her room now and then; it seems as if she were quite cut off from us: and Margaret says the same; for indeed, Amy, you cannot think how sorry Margaret is now for what she did. She has been speaking about it to me this morning, and she wishes so

much to say something. I believe aunt Herbert made her promise to do it, when she had that long conversation with her the other day. When do you think Emily will be able to see us both? I mean not just for a few minutes, but really to talk to her."

"I daresay she will to-morrow," said Amy; "for I believe she intends going down stairs as usual, now; and then you will see how true it is that she does not think about any thing, but really loves you very much."

"She is almost an angel, I believe," said Dora, earnestly.

"Yes, indeed she is," exclaimed Amy; "I am afraid to think much about her being so good, because then I get a fancy that she will be taken away; and I could not bear her to go."

"But I don't think she will stay here," said Dora.

"What do you mean?" inquired Amy, hastily.

"It will be so different now to what it used to be. She will not have much to do with Margaret and me; and I am nearly sure she will go."

"But not yet—you cannot mean yet?" said Amy. "I daresay it may be when you are quite grown up; but that is so far off."

"I think she will leave us at once," said Dora. "I have often heard mamma say that she had but one very great reason for keeping her; and you know that is all gone."

"Yes," said Amy, thoughtfully; "but she can teach you still."

"Mamma's notions are changed, lately, I think," replied Dora; "she does not like having a person who is a governess and no governess."

"But has she said any thing to you?" inquired Amy.

"No; for poor mamma does not think of any thing now. I don't know when she will again."

"Then Miss Morton cannot possibly go away yet?"

"Perhaps not; but at any rate she will before very long. I wonder you never yet thought about it, Amy."

"It seems quite impossible," said Amy. "I cannot think of Emmerton and you without her."

"She will never be happy here," replied Dora; "so perhaps it will be better; only I should be glad for her to remain here some time. I think I should try and make her comfortable."

"I must ask mamma," said Amy. "It makes me so unhappy to think about it. I shall never rest till it is quite certain."

"I don't think any one knows for certain," replied Dora; "but you will soon learn from what Emily says herself."

"I cannot ask her," said Amy: "but I am sure mamma must know; and she must be come in by this time. I wonder whether what papa wished to say to Miss Morton had any thing to do with it?"

"Oh, no! he would not be the person to talk to her. But you need not distress yourself so much, Amy; it will not be just yet."

"I must know," said Amy. And she ran off to her mother's room; but she was stopped by Susan Reynolds, who told her that Miss Morton desired to speak to her. Amy's fears immediately conjectured the intelligence she was to receive, and her face plainly betrayed her anxiety. "Is it any thing very particular?" she said, as she entered. "Is any thing the matter?"

"Why should you think so?" replied Emily, gently. "It is not very strange that I should like to have you with me."

"But Dora says,"—and here Amy paused, for she felt that to repeat the conversation would be to inquire into Miss Morton's plans.

"What does she say?" asked Emily. "You are not afraid of telling me any thing, are you?"

"Not if it is right," replied Amy; "but I don't think I ought to say this."

"Then you shall not," said Emily. "I am sure you will judge properly: only if it is any thing that concerns me, you need hardly think that I should be vexed."

"Are you quite sure? I should be so very glad to know; but I thought it would seem impertinent."

"I will let you ask any thing you like," replied Emily; "and if it is something I must not answer, I will tell you."

"You will not go away?" said Amy timidly, and at the same time looking anxiously in Miss Morton's face.

"I am going from Emmerton," replied Emily; and poor Amy felt as if a shot had passed through her heart. "But I am not going far away, I hope," she added, as she watched the quiet tears that trickled down Amy's cheek. "It depends upon you how far."

"Oh, no!" exclaimed Amy; "it cannot depend upon me. You know I would never have you go away from me; I would have you live with me always, and I would love you, and do every thing for you, and I would attend to all your wishes; and then, perhaps, some day you might say that I had made you happy."

"And will you really love your governess?" said Emily. And she put her arm round Amy's waist, and drew her fondly towards her.

The truth flashed in a moment across Amy's mind. "Was that really what papa said?" she exclaimed.

"He asked me," replied Emily, "if I would go back with you to the Cottage: and he said that you should be my pupil; and now you shall decide."

Amy could not answer; for words are even more powerless to express joy than grief. But Emily needed no assurances; and for the moment she yielded without fear to the consolation which an affection so deep was capable of affording her.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THERE was a strange mixture of feeling in Amy's mind, on the following morning, when she thought of all that had lately occurred. It was impossible to forget Rose, but it was equally impossible to avoid thinking of Emily; and she immediately began to anticipate the pleasure of living with her, and exerting herself for her happiness. The new arrangement was satisfactory to every one, though when named to Mrs Harrington, she merely said, "Yes, certainly, it would do very well;" and then appeared to take no further interest in it. Even Dora and Margaret felt it a comfort that Emily would be near them; for now that they were about to lose her, they first began to be sensible of her value. Little unthought-of kindnesses and daily self-denials were remembered, with regret that they had been so lightly appreciated; and Dora looked at her music-books, and Margaret at her portfolio, and sighed as they thought that they should have no one for the future to take an interest in them as Emily had done.

"I shall envy you more than ever, Amy," said Dora, as they walked together in the garden a few days afterwards. "I always thought you were happier than we were; and lately I am sure of it."

"You will get better by-and-by," said Amy. "I know how you must feel,—the place is so altered."

"Yes," observed Margaret; "and it will never be what it was again. It does not look the same."

"I think even the blue sky has grown dim," said Dora; "yet I like to look at it, because I can think that little Rose is there. But the sky will never be dim to you, Amy."

"Why not?" asked Amy. "I know I must have a great many sorrows, just as other people have."

"But," replied Dora, "I am sure it is something in one's own mind which causes it. The earth often looks gloomy when there is really nothing the matter; but I do not think the sky would, if we never did wrong: and that is the reason why I do not think it ever will to you."

"Indeed, Dora," exclaimed Amy; "you don't know any thing about me: and you will find out some day how bad I am."

"I don't wish to find it out," said Dora. "It pleases me to believe there are some people in the world who always do right."

"Then you shall believe it of mamma, and Mrs Walton, and Miss Morton," said Amy.

"I don't like to think of Emily," replied Dora. "When will she let us go and talk to her?"

"I hope she will soon," said Margaret. "It quite weighs upon my mind."

"I told her, yesterday, that you wished it," answered Amy; "and then she said you thought a great deal more about things than herself, and she did not like you to be distressed; and that she had thought you would have understood her feelings by her manner at breakfast and dinner."

"That will not quite please my aunt," said Margaret. "I promised her I would speak to Emily myself; and I do wish very much to do what she likes."

"There is Miss Morton just coming down the steps," said Amy: "perhaps if I were to go away, you would like to say something now."

Margaret rather hesitated, feeling half ashamed when the opportunity was given her; but Dora urged that there might be no delay: and Amy went into another walk.

"I fancied," said Emily, as she came up to them,

"that Amy was with you. Mr Walton is in the house, and wishes to see her."

"I will go and call her," said Dora; "she is only gone into one of the back walks."

Emily begged she would not trouble herself; but Dora felt quite pleased with the opportunity of showing her a little attention: and Margaret and Emily were left alone. Margaret was extremely embarrassed; and Emily, perceiving that something was the matter, made a few passing observations on the beauty of the weather.

Margaret's answers were short, for her mind was pre-occupied; and it was not till she saw Dora returning that she summoned courage to say, "You would not let me speak to you before; but I must tell you now, I am so very sorry,—and I have wished so much that you should know it."

"Indeed, I have known it," replied Emily; "and I hoped you would have understood from my manner how little I have thought about it. We have both been suffering too much not to feel for each other; and I have had you in my mind very often, and wished that I could have comforted you."

"But it was not only that," continued Margaret; "I wanted to say, and so did Dora too, that we know we have often been very unkind, and done a great many wrong things; and we should be much happier if you would say that you forgive us."

"Will you?" said Dora, who had been walking a few paces by their side.

"I do not like to say it," replied Emily: "it seems now as if I had no right to do it. All the pleasure I have known for the last two years has been found in your family; and what I feel now is thankfulness that it has been so much greater than I deserve."

"But we did not make you happy," said Dora. "You would have been miserable if it had not been ——"

"For Rose," continued Emily, firmly. "I do not know, indeed, how I should have felt without her; but with her I had, at times, all that I dared desire: and now God has given me blessings for which I can never be sufficiently grateful."

"Yes," said Dora: "Amy is a blessing to every one."

"And you are blessings, too," replied Emily, in a tone of deep interest and kindness. "You do not know the satisfaction you are affording me now; and you may be unspeakable blessings to your parents."

"We shall not know what to do when you are gone," said Margaret; "and my aunt and Amy also."

"Your mamma will recover herself by-and-by, I have no doubt; and then we shall be so near, it will be scarcely like a separation."

"There was one thing," said Dora, "which I thought I would ask you; but I am afraid you will not tell me if you had rather not."

"I will tell you really, though," replied Emily. "I always try to say exactly what I mean."

"Then do you think, sometimes, if we go to the Cottage, you would be able to hear us play, and look at our drawings? We shall be so very much at a loss without you."

"I trust," said Emily, "that my being away will make but very little difference to you in those things; you know I shall not be so far off but that I can come to you, or assist you whenever it will give you the smallest pleasure."

Dora expressed her thanks, and felt how little she deserved such kindness; and Margaret hoped that she would not leave them yet. "Every thing will seem a great deal worse then," she said.

"Mrs Herbert intends staying with your mamma while she continues so ill, I believe," replied Emily; "but when she is better, I heard Colonel Herbert say, he should like to go directly to the Cottage."

"Do you know what Dr Bailey thinks about mamma?" asked Margaret.

"He says that she requires change, but she is not equal to the exertion of moving."

"I wish we might go somewhere before Frank returns to school," observed Dora. "He has had such melancholy holidays."

"Should you like to go to London?" said Emily.

Margaret started at the idea. "Oh! no,—not to London; any place but that."

"I thought you wished it once," said Emily.

"Yes; but things are altered since then. I shall never wish to go there."

Emily looked surprised; but she did not inquire the reason of Margaret's sudden alteration of feeling, thinking it was most probably caused by the loss they had all sustained; and remarking that Mr Walton might perhaps wish to see them before he went away, she proposed that they should go into the house. The mention of London brought many sad reflections to Margaret's mind; and while slowly following her sister and Emily, she began to think of Miss Cunningham, and to wonder what her feelings had been upon learning all that had happened, and whether the idea that she had been the origin of it had occurred to distress her. "Do you think Lucy will go to London without us?" she said to Dora.

"She will never go at all, if she does not," replied Dora. "Papa will not consent to her being with us again as she used to be."

"She will be very sorry about it," said Margaret.

"Oh! it will not signify to her. She will find other persons to suit her just as well; and she will go to gay parties, and drive about in the parks, and forget us, and every thing about us."

"Not every thing," said Margaret. "I am sure she cannot forget every thing, She must feel for us."

"Perhaps she may care for a day or two; but it is not her way to think on any subject long. Do you think it is?" added Dora, turning to Emily, and moving aside to allow her to pass before her into the house.

"I hope it may be, by-and-by," was the reply; "but I am afraid she has not been taught to think much as yet."

"There is one of the Rochford servants coming down the avenue now," said Dora. "Perhaps he has brought a note or a message."

"I suppose he is only come as usual to inquire for mamma," said Margaret. "Morris says Lord Rochford has sent nearly every day."

There was, however, a note for Margaret, which was given her just as she was about to go into the drawing-room, but there was no time to read it till Mr Walton was gone.

He did not stay long, for he had seen Mrs Harrington, and was anxious to return home to keep an engagement; but he was very much pressed to repeat his visit, especially by Mrs Herbert, who hoped that seeing him might be effectual in exciting Mrs Harrington's interest. "I think," she said, "that my sister will take more notice of you another time: I remarked to-day that she listened more than usual to what you were saying."

Mr Walton promised to return, if possible, the next day; and then, taking his leave, Margaret was at liberty to read Miss Cunningham's note. It was short, and Margaret thought cool, although there were many expressions of sympathy for the family. "Her brother," she said, "had begged her to write, but she had not much to say, though she was extremely sorry for them, and hoped that Mrs Harrington had not been very angry with Margaret. She expected soon to be able to drive over to Emmerton, and, in the mean time, should be very glad to hear of them all."

"I would not give much for Miss Cunningham's affection after such a note as that," said Dora.

"What did you expect from her?" asked Emily.

"I don't know, exactly; but any one might have written it: and after being with us so much, I think she might have said something more. I did not imagine she cared for me at all, but I thought she had some feeling for Margaret."

"Do you think it cool?" said Margaret, turning to Emily.

"Rather," she replied: "but you could scarcely have supposed she would have written in any other way."

"Why not?" asked Amy.

"Because it is seldom people feel much for sorrows that are not present to them. If Miss Cunningham had been with us for the last ten days she would probably have cared very much more."

"She is so selfish," observed Dora; "she never can sympathise with any one."

"Indeed," replied Emily, "I think she would if she were taught to do it."

"How can persons be taught to feel?" said Dora; "it must come naturally to them."

"Not quite. The feelings are certainly given to us originally, but they may be very much increased by action. If Miss Cunningham were once taught to do little trifling kindnesses for her friends she would soon feel for them. You know it is almost a proverb that benefactors are fond of those on whom they confer favours."

"I daresay you may be right," said Dora; "but I cannot imagine that Lucy Cunningham will ever be any thing but a cold, hard-hearted, disagreeable girl. Margaret perhaps may find out her virtues some day or other, but I am afraid I never shall."

Margaret was silent;—she was vexed and disap-

pointed, but did not like to own it; and she was so fully aware of her unkindness to Emily, that she expected Lucy to be the same, forgetting how differently they had been circumstanced. Miss Cunningham's preference had flattered her, whilst she believed it real; but she was now beginning to perceive that where selfishness is the foundation of the character no trust can be placed in any professions of affection.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

It was about three weeks afterwards, during which time nothing particular had occurred to vary Amy's life at Emmerton, that Margaret received a second note from Miss Cunningham, which gave her much greater vexation than the former. It was written more naturally, but the tone was one of considerable annoyance.

Lord Rochford, at Mr Cunningham's request, had settled that the journey to London should be postponed another year; as, upon consideration, he thought Lucy too young to join in any amusements, and not sufficiently advanced in her education to profit by masters. The French governess was, therefore, to be dismissed, and another provided, who might be more equal to instruct her.

"This is the most provoking part of the whole business," wrote Miss Cunningham. "Madame was the kindest creature possible, and allowed me to do just as I chose in every thing; and now I shall be pestered from morning till night by a stiff, formal, odious Englishwoman. And I must say, Margaret, that it is a very great deal your doing; at least, I am sure, if I had not gone to Emmerton, nothing of the kind would have been thought of; and George has grown so disagreeable lately, he is not to be endured."

"It would be strange," said Dora, when Margaret showed her the note, "if, after all, we should go to London, now that Lucy is obliged to stay at home."

Margaret was unprepared for the idea, for she had not been so much with her father as Dora, and was,

therefore, not aware of the conversation that had lat
passed between him and Mrs Herbert. Dora co
not give her any certain information; but she kn
that a plan was in agitation for some change; and
had overheard Colonel Herbert urging her father
try London. The reason of this was, not simply t
Mrs Harrington required a different scene to reli
her spirits, but that it was also considered advisa
to have the benefit of further medical advice. S
had, indeed, partly recovered her interest in eve
day occurrences, but her nerves had been so mu
shaken, that but little discernment was needed to d
cover how much she was altered. The necess
orders for the arrangement of the house were given
usual, but she had entirely lost the quick, restl
activity which had formerly made her notice even
minutest inattention to her wishes; and when
morning occupations were over, she would sit abstrac
and silent for hours, having apparently neither
power nor the inclination to move. Every nc
startled, and every exertion was a trouble to her;
days were gloomy, and her nights disturbed: and
husband could not but have many anxious fears
the future, if she were to continue long in such a sta
The only thing which really seemed to rouse a
comfort her was the conversation of Mr Walton, wh
visits at the Hall were now almost of daily occurren
At first she had allowed him in silence to talk to M
Herbert; but, after a time, her interest in his obser
tions was awakened; and Mrs Herbert, perceiving
took frequent opportunities of leaving them togeth
and although the result of these interviews was as
but slightly apparent, they gave Mrs Herbert ma
sanguine hopes that they might eventually be
infinite service.

As Mrs Harrington's health improved, Colonel H
bert bec me desirous of returning to the Cottage,

he longed to enter upon the plan of life which he had so often pictured to himself: and he was afraid that, whilst Mrs Herbert remained at Emmerton, she would continue to exert herself far beyond her strength. It was impossible, also, that Miss Morton should recover her spirits whilst in a place where every thing reminded her of little Rose; for although Amy was her constant companion, her occupations were gone, and her feelings unsettled: and Colonel Herbert, who watched her with interest, saw in her subdued, melancholy countenance, an additional inducement for hastening his departure. Mrs Harrington strongly objected to the idea of going to London, when the proposition was first made; but her husband's uneasiness at length prevailed on her to consent, much to the distress of Margaret, who could look forward to nothing but gloom in a journey undertaken under such different circumstances from what she had originally anticipated. "I wish," she said to Dora, when the plan was mentioned as positively settled, "that my uncle had proposed any thing else; there might have been a little pleasure in going to some other place, but there can be nothing but dulness and misery in London."

"Yes," said Dora; "I really think that sometimes having what we wish is a punishment to us; not that I ever cared for London as you did, Margaret; but I used to fancy that it would be nice to see all the sights."

"I will never wish again," said Margaret; "it only makes one disappointed when the time comes. I suppose now we shall go to a dull, quiet part of the town, and not see any one."

"And have lessons," continued Dora, "without any person to help us, as Emily would have done; and be engaged all day besides in attending upon mamma."

Margaret remembered her conversation with Miss

Cunningham, when she had been threatened with almost precisely the same kind of life; and it was impossible not to feel that what Dora had said might be true: her punishment seemed, indeed, to have been sent in the partial gratification of the wishes she had so wrongly indulged.

"How I envy Amy," she exclaimed. "Every thing will be delightful to her, and every thing will be wretched to us."

"Amy deserves happiness," said Dora. "If we were to change places to-morrow, we should not feel as she does."

"No," replied Margaret. "I don't think I should quite like living in that small Cottage, and having things so different from what they are here; but she does not care about it."

"I think she used to do so," said Dora: "but I am sure she must have seen lately that luxuries are no comfort when people are unhappy. It is not because of the Cottage being smaller, that I think we should not be happy if we lived there, but because we are not at all like Amy."

"Of course not," replied Margaret: "what two people in the world are alike? And then we have been brought up so differently."

"A great many people are alike, though," said Dora; "my aunt, and uncle, and Emily are, and Mr Walton, too: and I would rather think and feel as they do than live in a palace."

"Would you?" said Margaret; "I am not sure about that."

"But, indeed," replied Dora, "it must be better. I never thought about it till I knew Amy; but now I am quite certain. All such persons seem to carry about their happiness with them."

"Not always. I have seen Amy unhappy; and Emily Morton, we all know, has been miserable."

"Yes," said Dora; "but I am sure it is not like our unhappiness. There is always something to comfort them, because they think their troubles are sent them, and that they shall be happy when they die, even if they are ever so miserable now. I could bear anything if I did not think it would last for ever."

"But how should it?" said Margaret. "You know every thing will come to an end at some time or other."

"Oh! Margaret," exclaimed her sister, "please don't talk so."

"Why not? it is true."

"No," replied Dora; "it cannot be true to say that troubles will come to an end when we die, if we have not tried to do right. Amy put it into my head to think about it one night, when I was with her as she was going to bed. She said that sleep was like death, and perhaps we might never wake again: and ever since that I have never gone to sleep without remembering it; and sometimes I become so frightened."

"I should be frightened too," said Margaret, "if I thought about it: but I never do; it is very disagreeable."

"Amy does not think it disagreeable," answered Dora. "She told me that same night how happy she was when she went to bed; and that she thought angels watched over her. Oh! how I wish I could be like her!"

"It makes me uncomfortable to think of it," said Margaret. "It must be impossible."

"I should be glad to try, though," replied Dora. "I never saw any one else who made me wish it half as much. Almost all other good persons we have known have been so much older: and I never believed it was possible to be so good when one was so young."

"It will be very nice to have her here again when

we come back from London," said Margaret; "and Emily Morton, too. I could never bear this place now if it were not for them."

At this instant Amy ran hastily into the room—evidently the bearer of some news which she was anxious to communicate. "Do you know," she exclaimed, "when you are going?"

"No," replied Dora. "Papa, I think, has written about a house, but he has not had an answer."

"The answer is just come," continued Amy; "and there is some reason why you must hasten, rather: so my uncle says. I believe you must take the house from next Monday; and therefore you are all to leave Emmerton on Tuesday, and to be in London on Wednesday."

"So very soon," said Dora, looking grave.

"I was in hopes you would like it," replied Amy. "I know you did not wish it at first, but I fancied when the time came you really would be glad. Frank is delighted, because my uncle says he shall stay a day or two extra with you in London before he goes to school."

"And you will go back to the Cottage," said Dora. "What a happy party you will be!"

"Not Miss Morton," replied Amy; "I don't think she will smile heartily for some time to come. But mamma wishes her to have every thing just as she likes: and we are to walk to the Cottage this afternoon to give some orders about her room, and then we are to call at the rectory."

"I should like to go with you," said Dora; "but mamma will want me at home; there will be so many things to be done now, the time is so short. Are you quite sure it is fixed?"

"I heard my uncle talking to papa about it; and he said some of the servants were to go on Monday to have every thing ready for you. But, dear Margaret, don't look so very sad."

"I cannot help it," said Margaret, bursting into tears. "Two months ago it would have given me such pleasure; and now it is so miserable."

"You will like it when you are there, I daresay," replied Amy.

"Oh, no, how can I? What will there be that will be pleasant, with mamma ill, and in bad spirits, and not going out anywhere, or seeing any one?"

"Should you have liked it better if Miss Cunningham had been there at the same time?" asked Amy.

"No," replied Margaret, almost indignantly. "It will never give me any pleasure to be with her again. She does not care for me, or for any one but herself; and she does nothing but blame me for every thing that happens that she does not like. I wish sincerely *I* had never seen or heard of her; perhaps then all might have been as it used to be."

"It can do no good to think so now," observed Dora, sighing. "We had better make the best of it all, and go and ask mamma what orders we are to give to Morris."

"Will Susan Reynolds go too? It would be rather nice having both of them," said Margaret. "Susan Reynolds is not to stay with us," replied Dora. "There will be nothing for her to do. Perhaps, Amy, my aunt will take her to the Cottage."

"No, she will not do that," answered Amy; "because I asked her about it yesterday, and she said it would be an additional servant; and papa would not like it: but Mrs Saville, I believe, has determined on taking her; and mamma thinks Susan will be quite contented with her by-and-bye, though just now she is very unhappy at leaving Miss Morton."

"I am glad she is not going far away," said Dora. "I have liked her lately a great deal better than Morris."

"I like her," observed Amy, "because she is so

fond of Miss Morton, and was so kind and thoughtful the other day, when she was in such distress."

Margaret's face flushed upon hearing this allusion to the suffering of which she had been the cause, for she could never think of it without pain; and each day, as she became more alive to Emily's goodness, she wondered more at her own selfishness. There was now, however, but little time for reflection—so much was to be quickly arranged in consequence of the hasty departure, that every moment was occupied; and Margaret began to forget her sorrow in the bustle of preparation. The excitement was of use also to Mrs Harrington. She gave her orders with something like energy, and seemed to have recovered a portion of her former quickness of discernment; yet Mrs Herbert remarked little instances of consideration, which had before been quite foreign to her character. She herself collected many things that had belonged to little Rose, and giving them to Mrs Herbert, requested that they might be kept for Miss Morton till after they were gone; and, on the day previous to the journey, she called Emily to her room, and, after expressing how much she felt for the affectionate care that had always been evinced to her darling child, she put into her hands a gold locket, enclosing a bright curl of chesnut hair, which she begged might be worn for the sake of one who had been very precious to them both. Emily was more deeply touched by the tone in which this was spoken than even by the action itself. It told of a broken, humble spirit; and much as she longed to comfort a mother's grief, she could not but rejoice in the effect that it appeared likely to produce on her character.

"We shall see you again to-morrow, as we pass the Cottage," said Mrs Harrington, when Emily had warmly thanked her for this remembrance. "Colonel Herbert insists upon our calling; but it will only be

for a moment, as we shall have a long day's journey before us."

"Perhaps," said Emily, "you would allow me to remain here to-night. I might be able to assist you; and it would be a pleasure to me to think that my last evening at Emmerton had been a useful one."

But Mrs Harrington would on no account listen to the proposal. She saw that Emily was feeling very much even then; and she knew that it would be far worse for her on the following morning, when the house would be left silent and deserted. "I shall be glad," she said, "to think that we leave you comfortably settled with friends who are so much interested about you; and I am sure neither Mrs Herbert nor Amy would bear the thought of your staying behind."

Emily did not press the proposal, for she was conscious that to act upon it would give her much pain; but she employed the hour that elapsed before the carriage was ordered to take them to the Cottage in arranging different things for Dora and Margaret, which they did not understand themselves, and which Morris thought herself too busy to attend to.

The moment for departure at length arrived; but Amy would not allow that she was saying "good-bye," for she dwelt upon the thought of seeing her cousins the next morning.

"It is good-bye to Emmerton, though," said Dora.

"Yes," replied Amy; "and I don't like it at all, now it is come to the point. I shall always avoid the place till your return. It will be nearly the summer then, I suppose, or, at least, it will be quite late in the spring."

"You must write very often," said Dora: "it will be our greatest pleasure when we are shut up in London." And then, turning to Emily, she added, "I have no right to ask any favour of you; but you do not know how glad we should be to hear from

you. We should think then that you had quite forgiven us."

"I cannot write for that purpose," said Emily, endeavouring to smile; "but if you will let me tell you how I am, and what I am doing, for my own satisfaction, I think you will not find me negligent."

"It seems," said Amy, "as if I had a great many things to say; but everything is ready, and papa and mamma are waiting. You will be sure and call to-morrow."

Emily would have spoken again, but her heart was full. Even the prospect of her life at the Cottage could not, at that moment, make her forget all that had once constituted the charm of Emmerton: and with a feeling of regard for Dora and Margaret, which a few months before she would have thought it almost impossible to experience, silently and sadly she followed Amy to the carriage.

The fire blazed cheerfully in the breakfast-room at Emmerton Cottage on the following morning, and the sun shone brightly through the window, as if to prophesy that the gloom of the winter would speedily be passed away. And there were faces assembled round the table, which suited well with the brilliancy of the weather. Even Emily, as she seated herself by Mrs Herbert's side, and listened to her tones of kindness, and watched Colonel Herbert's attention to her most trifling wishes, could scarcely feel sad; or if an occasional shadow crossed her mind, it vanished as she looked upon Amy, and saw the deep tranquil happiness expressed in every feature of her countenance. It was the happiness not merely of external circumstances, but of the inmost heart; for Amy's recollections of the past were as peaceful as her hope for the future was unclouded; and the blessing of a holy, humble spirit, was one which no wealth could have purchased. Many glances were turned to the window to watch for

the carriage from Emmerton; but breakfast was nearly over before it was seen turning the corner of the lane. Amy ran to the door to beg that they would come in; but Mr Harrington thought it better not, as they were already so much later than they had intended. The joint entreaties of Dora and Margaret at last, however, prevailed, though the permission was granted only for one instant.

"I wished so much to do it," said Dora, "because I want to fancy how you go on when we are in London; and it will not seem natural to think that Emily is here unless I have seen her."

"I can hardly believe that she is really living with us," replied Amy; "but I should be dreadfully sorry to think that it was not true."

Dora's glance around the room was but momentary, yet it was sufficient to make her feel how blest Amy must be with such a home, and such parents. "I could envy you, Amy, so very much," she said, after they had both spoken a few kind words to Emily, and urged her not to forget her promise of writing; "yes, I could envy you for every thing."

"Not envy," said Colonel Herbert; "you would not wish to deprive her of her blessings."

"No," answered Dora; "but I would wish to share them: every one wishes for happiness."

"And every one might find it," observed Colonel Herbert, "if they would but seek for it rightly. Perhaps, though, I was wrong in saying happiness; but peace, which is the nearest approach to it on earth, is in every one's power."

Mr Harrington's voice was heard calling to his daughters to hasten; and the conversation was abruptly broken off.

"What did your papa mean, Amy?" said Dora, as she stood upon the step of the carriage. "Just tell me, in one word, if you can, that I may think about it."

"He must have meant," answered Amy, "what I have often been told, that when people are good their hearts are at peace, and then no sorrow can really make them miserable."

Dora had not time to reply. The parting words were once more spoken; the carriage drove from the door; and Amy returned to her happy fireside, and the enjoyment of the blessing she had that moment described.

Mr and Mrs Harrington returned with their family to Emmerton; and to a careless observer, it might have seemed that the death of their child had produced but a passing impression on their minds. The first bitterness of grief was gradually softened by time, and the daily occupations of life; and calmness, and even cheerfulness, were at length restored to them. But the effects of their sorrow were not the less real, because exhibited in action rather than in words. They were to be seen in a constant observance of family worship, in an increasing attention to their children and servants, and in the untiring exertions which were made to assist Mr Walton in providing for the comfort and instruction of the poor. The change was felt by every one within the reach of their influence; but to Dora, it was a blessing beyond all price, for Emmerton was so retired as to oblige her to depend entirely upon her home for happiness; and in her parents she now met, not only with affection, but sympathy, and, from their example, learnt to find her chief satisfaction in the quiet performance of every-day duties. Of Miss Cunningham she saw but little, Mrs Harrington being too fully alive to the defects of her disposition and education, to feel any longer inclined to cultivate an intimacy which had once been consi-

dered of so much importance; and although Margaret's character differed too widely from Dora's to afford all that was required in a friend, her sister was enabled, by continual watchfulness, to bear with her failings, and cherish her better qualities, while the society of Amy gave her the great blessing of confidence and mutual interest, which formerly she had so much needed.

And years passed on, and Emily Morton was still an inmate of the Cottage. Amy no longer depended upon her instruction, but the blessing of her love and her example, when once felt, it was hard to part from; and neither Colonel Herbert nor his wife could willingly consent again to cast upon the mercy of the world one who had gradually become dear to them as their eldest child. Colonel Herbert had prophesied truly, when he said that the summer of Emily's life was yet to come. The remembrance of Rose never faded from her mind, but it was blended with a calm and lasting gratitude for the mercy which had taken her in her innocence to a world where there was no sin; and Amy's deep affection, and never-ceasing consideration for her happiness, filled up entirely the aching void, which would otherwise have been left in her heart. Neither was there any cause now to fear lest Miss Morton should be treated with ridicule or contempt at Emmerton, for the feelings with which she was there regarded were those of the truest esteem and regard; a regard heightened by the circumstances which had for ever associated her with the remembrance of little Rose.

And of Amy herself, what more need be said? If the Cottage had been a scene of happiness, when shared only with her mother, its enjoyment was tenfold increased by the presence of her father and Miss Morton. Mrs Herbert's health was, for some time, a source of anxiety; but care, and the tranquillity of her

domestic life, by degrees restored her natural strength, and Amy's mind was then completely at rest; and although, as she grew up, the romance with which she had once invested Emmerton partially vanished, her pleasure in visiting it became more real as she felt, day by day, that her cousins were more fully her friends, and able to enter into her highest and purest pleasures. And there were times when even the visions of her childhood seemed realized. The chapel was opened for daily service whenever the opportunity offered; and Amy could then yield to the influence of its hallowed beauty, without one sigh of regret, as she gazed not upon noble knights and high-born ladies, but upon those she best loved on earth, about to join in the solemn act of united worship, and to offer to their Maker, not only the sacrifice of their lips, but also of their hearts and lives.

Amy's lot was indeed blest: blest in her parents, her relations, and her friends; but, above all, blest in that she had been taught to remember her Creator in the days of her youth, and could look forward with calm confidence to the Divine support in the "evil days," which must come upon all.

THE END.

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February, 1846.

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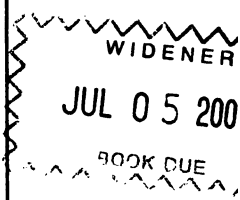

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